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The English Ode
from MILTON *to* KEATS

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The English Ode
from MILTON *to* KEATS

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER



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Foreword

THE FOLLOWING study was begun upon the advice of the late Professor Ashley Thorndike of Columbia University, to whose memory I turn reverently because he was a friendly teacher and critic. He had read, sympathetically and helpfully, my *Catholic Spirit in Modern English Literature* before that book was published; and he thought that my experience as an editor of periodical verse might be put to good use as ballast if I were to ship on an enterprise such as this. During many years the *Commonweal* enjoyed a fine reputation as an organ for the poets—a fact attributable in large measure to the interest taken in the publication by such men and women as Thomas Walsh, R. P. Tristram Coffin, G. K. Chesterton, Padraic Colum, Aline Kilmer, and many others. I have discussed the ode with a number of these writers of modern verse and have learned not a little from them.

Naturally, that would by no means have sufficed. I have learned to value the kindly interest and ripe scholarship of not a few students of English literary history, notably Professors Frank A. Patterson, Hoxie Neale Fairchild, and Emery Neff of Columbia University. Many other students of verse forms, among them Professor Arpad Steiner of Hunter College and Professor Romano Guardini of the University of Berlin, have been generous with their time and interest. My appreciation, thus laconically stated, is deep and sincere. It must be added that my debt to Professor Ernest Hunter Wright for friendly encouragement cannot be repaid.

Inevitably, a book of this character owes much to the great libraries of the world. I have had the courteous assistance of

Foreword

the staffs of the British Museum, the Bodleian Library, the Preussische Staatsbibliothek, Columbia University Library, Yale University Library, and the Widener Memorial Library. Thanks are due to my colleagues at Hunter, especially Mrs. Anne Trinsey, for help in reading the proofs. It goes without saying that my wife, at the conclusion of this work, has another good reason for citing the familiar Barrie play.

G.N.S.

*Hunter College
New York City
July, 1940*

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CHAPTER ONE · *Introduction*

THIS BOOK will treat of the English ode as it was written during the period which, roughly speaking, extends from the middle of the seventeenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. It will consider the development of the form and the uses to which it was put by writers who varied considerably in outlook, inspiration, and ability. The objectives to be sought may be briefly defined as follows: to write a history of the ode which, while by no means exhaustive, will give a fairly satisfactory account of what it has been; to consider the especial values of the form, for example, its usefulness in linking poetry with music; and to weigh with some care the effect which ode writing has had upon the prosody of lyric verse. These are, I think, matters of relative importance to the student of English poetry. They have not been discussed hitherto with the requisite attentiveness.

The first difficulty one confronts is, of course, the fact that no adequate definition of the ode has been established. If I may resort to an allusion, the frivolity of which is apparent, it can be said to have been all things to all men. The attitude of earlier centuries towards the term was by no means uniform, as we shall see. And though there is a prevailing modern feeling that an ode is a poem of address written about a theme of universal interest,¹ there are numerous inconsistencies both in practice and in theory.² I have asked a dozen good modern

¹ The definition is substantially that given by Laurence Binyon in "The English Ode," *Essays by Divers Hands*, edited by W R Inge (London, 1919). With it a number of living poets are relatively in agreement.

² Edmund Gosse, in *English Odes* (New York, 1886), Introduction, p xiii, writes "We take as an ode any strain of enthusiastic and exalted lyrical verse, directed to a fixed purpose, and dealing progressively with one dignified theme."

poets to define the word, and no two of them are in complete agreement either with traditional descriptions or with each other.³ Thus, Padraic Colum believes that Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" is a representative example of what a good ode should be;⁴ and yet to Elizabeth Barrett Browning this poem apparently seemed rather commonplace.⁵ The dictionaries are similarly contradictory.⁶ It is, therefore, hardly surprising that when Karl Vietor wrote his *Geschichte der deutschen Ode*⁷ he suggested that the way out of the quandary was to ar-

Lascelles Abercrombie, in *Poetry Its Music and Meaning* (London, 1932), pp 58-59, is more hesitant "The kind of major lyric roughly called an *ode* may take many forms," he writes, adding that such a poem may be "a series of regular stanzas," or "a series of irregular stanzas," or "a series of large masses of varied versification," or "continuous versification of varied line-length," or "consist of tripartite movements." Good handbooks are similarly cautious. Thus J F A Pyre, in *A Short Introduction to English Versification* (New York, 1929), pp 46-47, offers the following definition "The term *ode* has been applied very loosely in our literature, and its metrical implications are only occasional and often very indefinite. Primarily, it refers to the content and spirit of a poem, implying a certain largeness of thought, continuity of theme, and exalted feeling." Pyre distinguishes between the "Irregular Ode" and the "Regular (Pindaric) Ode." See also *A Study of Poetry*, by Bliss Perry (Boston, 1920), pp 283-88.

¹ I may quote from a characteristic and well-informed letter received from a younger American poet, C A Millspaugh. After distinguishing between three kinds of odes, which he gives as "Pindaric," "homostrophic," and "false Pindaric," he goes on to say that the three are similar "in their approach to subject-matter and in effect." And he adds, "Odes, no matter what the metrical structure," should deal in "the impersonal and the universal." An ode may rise, as good poems do, from personal emotion, but such emotion must be, by the power of the poet's understanding, extended into universal concept." In *The Letters of Gamaliel Bradford, 1918-1931*, edited by Van Wyck Brooks (Boston, 1934), p 12, there is a letter on ode composition in reply to one by Charles Wharton Stork. Unfortunately Mrs Bradford, kindly replying to Mr Brooks's helpful inquiry in my behalf, found that the remainder of the correspondence had been lost.

⁴ "I think an ode is a poem of address, directed to the public on an occasion of general interest." Statement to the author.

⁵ "To be sure, there is the *Alexander's Feast* ode, called, until people half believed what they said, the greatest ode in the language." *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (London, 1932), p 649.

⁶ The *Oxford Dictionary* says "A rimed (rarely unrimed) lyric, often in the form of an address, generally dignified and exalted in feeling, subject and style, but sometimes (in earlier use) simple and familiar (though less so than a song)." The *Standard Dictionary* says "The modern ode is intended to be read only, and is written in arbitrary stanzas of varying verse-lengths."

⁷ Munich, 1923. See the *Vorbemerkungen*, pp 1-5.

rive by the inductive route at some substantial certainty about the meaning of the term. For this he has, however, been soundly trounced by Emil Ermatinger, who holds that "induction" must necessarily mean "selection" and that one cannot possibly "select" something without knowing pretty well what it is.⁸

Those who have written about the English ode have likewise wrestled with the problem. Herbert Franklin Hamilton, nonplused by the fact that Addison's "Spacious Firmament on High" was dubbed both "hymn" and "ode," was inwardly ready to abandon a task which for academic reasons he nevertheless had somehow to complete.⁹ Robert Shafer's *The English Ode to 1660*¹⁰ is a good book occasionally stretched on the rack of comparable conundrums. Others—notably Paul Lieser¹¹—have drawn up lengthy catalogues of ode writers. This is a laborious task but no especially engrossing one.

I shall admit that there are reasons for thinking that a treatise written to establish a definition might well be worth while as a basis for further historical discussion. If it were attempted, the author would undoubtedly show that during the two centuries which followed the Renaissance the ode was never a fixed and measurable form like the sonnet (though this, too, was conceived of in divers ways), but that each poet had a very definite impression of what he meant by "ode" and a good reason for writing such a lyric. And if one tried to see how he came by that impression and why he was moved to write as he did, one would (I think) come upon facts possessing a certain historical and critical significance. One could also plot something like a curve of development from one notion of the ode to another. The present book will not ignore these

⁸ *Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft*, edited by Emil Ermatinger (Berlin, 1930), pp 333-34

⁹ See "The Pindaric Ode in English Verse" (unpublished dissertation, Yale, 1907), especially p 38

¹⁰ Princeton, 1918

¹¹ *Die englische Ode im Zeitalter des Klassizismus* (Bonn, 1932)

fields of inquiry, but its scope is considerably broader. Accordingly a statement as to what is here meant by ode must be prefixed to the discussion, though strict logic might demand, perhaps, that it come at the end.

By the word "ode" I mean in general a lyric based either upon the model of some classic poem which bore that designation or upon other English poems which go back, directly or indirectly, to imitations of the bards of Greece and Rome. Pindar, Horace, and Anacreon are the great exemplars, and to them the English added a fourth—David the Psalmist.¹² I shall limit the discussion further to the influence of the first and last of those named. This is admittedly arbitrary, because the influence of Horace was so pronounced during the period under investigation that it affected all lyric verse.¹³ As a matter of fact, I hope some day to write a more comprehensive treatise on the ode form and to include therein adequate data concerning the Horatian influence. Here a very cursory consideration of the topic must suffice.

There was some medieval and early Renaissance imitation of the Odes.¹⁴ Then in the days of Henry VIII the English Wyatt wrote in the Horatian manner, though it is debatable whether he thought any of his poems "odes." A. K. Foxwell

¹² Mention may also be made of Sappho, whose major contributions were her stanza and her reputation. See *Sappho The Poems and the Fragments*, by C. R. Haines (London, n. d.), especially pp. 198–225. Horace has always been the great exemplar of Sapphic stanza forms, though versions or paraphrases of the ode given in Longinus, *On the Sublime*, Section X, are not infrequent.

¹³ On Horace's influence, see *Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century*, by Caroline Goad (New Haven, 1918), and *The Influence of Horace on the Chief English Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, by Mary Rebecca Thayer (New Haven, 1916). Sample renderings by prominent English poets are conveniently afforded by *Horace. The Odes, Epistles and Satires, Translated by the Most Eminent English Scholars and Poets* (London, 1889).

¹⁴ Medieval imitation of Horatian lyric forms is summarized by Max Manitius in *Geschichte der Lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters*, Part III (Munich, 1931); thus the five Sapphic odes of Petrus Damianus (p. 74) and the Sapphic and Alcaic poems of Rupert von Deutz (p. 132). For a commentary on early Christian odes, see *Texte und Untersuchungen*, III, VII, by A. Harnack (Berlin, 1892). Victor, *op. cit.*, p. 7, believes that the word "ode" was lost in the Latin countries until 1140, when it was reintroduced by Honorius Augustodensis.

thinks he may have done so;¹⁵ some of her critics dissent.¹⁶ Later there was Sir Walter Raleigh, whose translations and imitations of Horatian odes are the best that have come down to us from the years before Ben Jonson.¹⁷ More generally, however, the Elizabethans neglected the Odes for the Satires and Epistles.¹⁸ Thus Spenser wrote, in the Preface to the *Shepheards Calender*: "And therefore Horace of his Odes (a worke though full indeed of wit and learning, yet of no great weight or importance), boldly saith, *Exegi monumentum aere perennius*." ¹⁹ It was Jonson who gave the Horatian stanza to English letters. As early as 1593, he was called "our English Horace" by Henry Chettle,²⁰ though the reason may have been the Jonsonian satires. At any rate, he published in *Underwoods* what appear to have been the first published renderings of Horatian odes and accompanied them with orig-

¹⁵ *A Study of Sir Thomas Wyatt's Poems* (London, 1911), pp. 11 ff., 77 ff.

¹⁶ For example, Shafer, *op cit.*, pp. 36-42. Warton in his *History of English Poetry* (London, 1824), III, 303, speaks of Wyatt's "odes," but his nomenclature is always that of his time.

¹⁷ *The Poems of Sir Walter Raleigh*, edited by Agnes M. C. Latham (Boston, 1929). For the versions of Horace, see pp. 50-63. Puttenham declares—in *Ancient Critical Essays upon English Poets and Poesy*, edited by Joseph Haslewood (London, 1811), I, 51—that "for dittie and amorous Ode I finde Sir Walter Rawlegh's wayne most loftie, insolent and passionate." Regrettably enough, it is to this part of his achievement that the fewest memorials survive. The *History of the World* does, however, enshrine a number of versions of Horation odes, and we may assume, I think, that these were not the only ones to have beguiled the poet Puttenham may be referring to the versions of the praises of Lydia, or to similar poems written out of the poet's own moods. The versions are deft enough, as was nearly everything Raleigh did, but one misses the sound of the Latin which would ring out so firm and clear later on in Milton and Marvell. This selfsame defect impairs what might otherwise be one of the great Horatian odes in English—"To the Queen" (Latham, *op cit.*, pp. 104-5). Here the persistent feminine rhymes and the delicately underscored antitheses make one feel that the poet's only real complaint to the Queen concerned her failure to smile at him during a masque or dance. I think we shall have to say that while Raleigh may have admired Horace, he was no Horatian.

¹⁸ See *Early Tudor Poetry*, by John M. Berdan (New York, 1920), especially p. 262.

¹⁹ First folio edition (London, 1611), p. 56. This is one of the earliest uses of the word "ode" in English.

²⁰ In *England's Mourning Garment* (c.1593). Quoted in *Collectanea Anglo-Poetica*, edited by Rev. Thomas Corser (Chetham Society, 1840), Part I, p. 508.

inal lyrics in the same vein.²¹ Accordingly, were there any doubt that Jonson had represented himself as Horace in *The Poetaster*,²² it would remain certain that the place he reserved for himself in the "new Rome" of London was that of the poet whose advice he so earnestly recommended to others.²³

Therewith Horace was firmly established as a model; and from Jonson's time to the present day the stream of "Horatian odes" has been fairly continuous.²⁴ Some of the more important prosodic achievements may be alluded to in passing: Milton's "Pyrrha Ode" stanza, rhymeless and deft in its arrangement; ²⁵ the Sapphic *Carmen Saeculare* stanza, as introduced by Sir Richard Fanshawe; the pattern of Andrew Marvell's "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland"; and Dryden's paraphrases, so interesting for both matter and form. Yet though these fine fruits can be plucked and described, the Horatian lyric remains on the whole so vague and elusive a thing that it can be studied only with the greatest difficulty under a critical microscope. One may add that care must be exercised to distinguish between it and the lesser verse of direct or indirect classical origin which derives for the most part from Catullus.²⁶ A term adapted from Aphra Behn—*billet-doux* verse ²⁷—may, perhaps, be used to char-

²¹ *The Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper*, edited by Alexander Chalmers (London, 1810), V, 496-97. Hereafter this work is referred to as Chalmers.

²² See *The Poetaster*, edited by Herbert S. Mallory (New York, 1905, "Yale Studies in English," Vol. XXVII).

²³ See *Ben Jonsons Poetik und seine Beziehungen zu Horaz*, by H. Reinsch (Erlangen, 1909), and *Ben Jonson and the Classical School*, by F. E. Schelling (Baltimore, 1898).

²⁴ In Jonson's own time, there appeared, for example, *Certain Selected Odes of Horace, Englished*, by John Ashmole[?] (London, 1621). See Corser, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 66. Original odes in the Horatian manner have been written during the modern period by Robert Bridges and others.

²⁵ This, and the odes by Marvell and Fanshawe, will be discussed in full below.

²⁶ See *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry*, by Arthur L. Wheeler (Berkeley, 1934), an excellent book from which I have learned much, and *Catullus in English Poetry*, by Eleanor S. Duckett (Northampton, 1925).

²⁷ See *The Works of Aphra Behn*, edited by Montague Summers (London,

acterize that extensive family of shorter poems which consist of lines addressed directly or indirectly to a mistress, lover, or friend.

Anacreon, though also undoubtedly a major Renaissance discovery, is more easily set aside. The sixteenth century had many good editions,²⁸ and both the Italian and the French poets were eager imitators. In so far as England is concerned, it is well-nigh impossible to decide whether early samples of Anacreontica were modeled after the original Greek or after foreign humanistic versions. It seems certain, however, that Robert Greene's "Cupid Abroad Was Lated"²⁹ was not derived from the Greek—that, indeed, its author may not even have suspected the existence of a classical original.³⁰ Much the same may be said concerning the drinking and love songs in Lyly's plays. The poems he seems to have written for various anthologies reveal for the most part a writer content to strike off a ditty to fit some chance ballad tune or eagerly aspiring to the quality demanded by the music of Byrd and Dowland.³¹ Yet the songs in *Campaspe*³² and *Sapho and Phao*³³ did inaugurate a tradition of Anacreontics as lyric interludes in drama.³⁴ There are fewer references to Anacreon in Eliza-

1915), p. 43. In *The Lover's Watch*, a lady sends "these Verses, instead of a Billetdoux."

²⁸ For example, *Anacreontis Teij odoe An Henrico Stephano lice & latinitate nunc primum donatae* (Lutetiae, 1554).

²⁹ From *Menaphon* (1589).

³⁰ Note also "This version of an ode by Anacreon has been accounted the earliest translation into English from that poet, but a brief one in Whitney's *Emblems*, 1586, preceded it." *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, edited by J. W. Hebel and H. H. Hudson (New York, 1929), p. 948.

³¹ *The Complete Works of John Lyly*, edited by R. W. Bond (Oxford, 1902), III, 433 ff.

³² *Ibid.*, II, 343, 351.

³³ *Ibid.*, II, 264.

³⁴ See, for example, the songs in *Technogamia* or, *The Marriage of the Arts A Comedie, Written by Barten Holiday, Master of Arts and Student of Christ Church in Oxford, and Acted by the Students of the Same House, before the Universitie at Shrovetide* (London, 1630). For comment and illustrations, see *The Retrospective Review*, VIII, 304 ff. The "Tobacco's a Musician" song is quoted in *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, p. 401.

bethan comment than to Pindar ³⁵—despite the fact that Scalliger deemed his verse sweeter than sugar.³⁶ At all events, the Anacreontic remains an easily recognizable form, and relatively few variations were introduced.³⁷

We come, then, to Pindar and David. Both exerted a profound influence by reason of the lofty religious character of their verse, and because of the seemingly untrammelled, even wild, character of their prosody. It will be the primary concern of this book to show how English poets derived from them, with varying degrees of immediacy, a number of lengthy lyric forms that served to express moods of fervor, reflection, and jubilation. At this point, however, a few general observations may be set down as indications to the reader of what this inquiry will show. First, the inspiration of many of our ode writers was enkindled by David, and his diction has become part of the warp and woof of our native song. But for obvious reasons he contributed little or nothing to poetic form proper. Pindar, on the other hand, afforded some inspiration, exerted a slight influence on diction, but is the distant begetter of the principal English ode forms. Of these last, three are particularly important: poems written in uniform stanzas, each of which comprises lines varying in length originally (with Jonson and the earlier poets) but tending towards regularity in later practice (for example, Collins and Keats); poems written in the irregular stanzas brought into vogue by Cowley, and sometimes called *verses irreguliers*; and poems written in the tripartite arrangement of Pindar's heroic odes, with strophes, antistrophes, and epodes which may be correctly or incorrectly employed. I think it is unnecessary to say more

³⁵ Francis Meres, in *Palladis Tamia* (London, 1598), pp 280-83, cites him not as one who has made the Greek tongue "famous and eloquent," but as a "Lyrick Poet."

³⁶ See *De Re Poetica; or, Remarks upon Poetry*, by Sir Thomas Pope Blount (London, 1644), "Characters and Censures," p 5.

³⁷ Among the best Anacreontics of the seventeenth century were those of Alexander Brome, the castigatour of all Roundheads, for whose songs Izaak Walton wrote a beautiful pastoral encomium See Chalmers, VI, 333 ff

about Pindar's originals here, beyond noting (what is sometimes ignored) that he wrote both monostrophic and polystrophic odes, but that neither were ever wild or irregular.³⁸

The English ode forms are quite distinct and memorable creations. They may sometimes appear the products of sheer accident, but that is almost never really the case. Prosodically they are characterized by their stanzas, and so the morphology of the stanza is one of the principal concerns of ode history. One must observe at this point that the use of the word "stanza" to denote divisions of a poem is highly questionable when those divisions do not conform. The major dictionaries do not sanction this usage. But there is no other word or phrase which will serve the purpose. Numerous other critics therefore prefer to speak, as I do in this book, of "stanzas" rather than "verse paragraphs." The stanza will be given its meed of attention throughout this book, though the reader must not expect the full treatment which could be supplied were I dealing with this matter alone in an effort to develop fully the analysis which Schipper partially completed.³⁹ We shall also have to do with the patterns of poems as such, which in English verse are highly significant because of the organic relationship which usually exists in our literature between inspiration and expression. In so far as the ode is concerned, this inspiration may be the product of thought, of emotion, or of both. Thus there is some justification for the modern feeling that odes are written around themes of universal interest. As a matter of fact, however, that impression is caused by the dominance of religious and patriotic moods in our traditional stately verse. There are important odes in the Pindaric manner which have a "universal theme" only if one stretches them badly to fit a theory.⁴⁰ The element of address is of no es-

³⁸ See, as a general introduction, *Pindarus*, by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (Leipzig, 1932)

³⁹ *Neuenglische Metrik (Englische Metrik, Part II)*, by J. Schipper (Bonn, 1888), Vol II, Chapter III.

⁴⁰ Relatively few odes before the time of Cowley had such themes.

pecial significance, being merely a reflection of the classical influence. All the verse of antiquity was addressed to somebody, primarily because it was either sung or read; and the traditions of song and recitation required that there be a recipient.

I shall, therefore, conclude that for the especial purposes of this treatise the word "ode" may be taken to mean a lyric poem derived, either directly or indirectly, from Pindaric models. These models were poems of praise, worship, reflection, commemoration, and patriotic sentiment. In addition they were, as is eminently natural, written in lengthier, more complex stanzas than those selected for ordinary lyric use. English poets cherished those qualities even when the example before them was not a Pindar ode but some imitation by a humanistic or more contemporary author. Perhaps they had only a vague notion of who Pindar was. Or perhaps their own muse was attuned to the Psalmist or the Christian hymnodists rather than to the Greeks. Yet even so they cast their poems in one of the molds patterned after the originals of Pindar during the late Renaissance or Baroque periods. In addition, the word "ode" as it is used here is wide enough to include some lengthier lyrics which, though devoted to praise, worship, or patriotic emotion, were cast in Horatian patterns or in patterns derived from Horatian imitation. For the Latin poet was also, in his way, a Pindarist.⁴¹

We need, moreover, to define broadly and tentatively the nature of the relationships between the ode and music. English poetry of the Renaissance was a poetry of song. Apparently some distinction was made between the "ballad" or vulgar ditty and the "ode," looked upon as one of the more refined forms of verse. Later, when styles in music changed and the artificial manner of the Italians was affected by the composers, verse designed to accompany music took on more

⁴¹ See Horace, *Ad Iulum Antonium*, Book IV, Ode 2, and *Das Pindargedicht des Horaz*, by E. Frankel (Heidelberg, 1933)

and more of the characteristics of the libretto. Since classical ideals were dominant during the same period, efforts to restore the unity of verse and song which had prevailed in antiquity were in order and led to a variety of experiments in ode writing. The results were often interesting, and some of the best-known poems of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were originally "libretto odes." This style was repudiated as artificial by the Romantic poets, and folk song recovered a measure of its lost popularity. Thereafter the ode was primarily a lyric designed to be read or declaimed; and it was not until late in the nineteenth century that the practice of writing odes for formal musical settings was widely revived. We shall see that this varied experience was a source of important prosodic innovations.

The effect of music upon verse structure was, however, only one way in which the ode affected the formal development of English verse. A few cursory remarks concerning what the history of the subject reveals may be offered here by way of introduction. Doubtless the stanzaic patterns were, as has been previously suggested, the most significant and most easily discernible gifts brought in by the Pindaric tide. In addition one may list three others: the increased suppleness of longer lyric and reflective poems which resulted from Pindaric imitation; the effect upon hymnody of conceptions of the poetic function associated with ode writing; and the character of the English tradition of encomiastic verse. These and similar matters are aspects of poetic history with which the present inquiry must be concerned.

Now a word about the method employed. Biographical information is somewhat rigorously banned, excepting when it throws light upon a given poet's work in the ode form; and the critic who may quite legitimately complain that there is a dearth of such information can be answered only with the statement that such a treatise as this necessarily has limitations of space and subject matter. Nor have I elected to discuss

with any fullness the ideas or the experience which the poems under consideration enshrine. That would be a beguiling occupation, but the pleasures which attend upon it have been renounced except in so far as they seem necessary to the description of selected type poems as works of art.

And what do I mean by "work of art"? Simply this: that although ideas are an integral part of poetic emotion and recollection, form is always the poet's major concern, even in times when the especial classical principles of imitation are discarded. Thus the most important fact about *Hamlet* is that its author managed to *express* the peculiar experience through which Hamlet passed. It was only after criticism commenced to realize this once again that the quite erroneous interpretations of what the play "means"—interpretations of which German Romantic criticism in particular had been guilty—could in a measure be corrected. Similarly, it is fairly easy to write a scholion on Wordsworth's Immortality Ode; and some of the attempts to do so are interesting and significant. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this ode would have been forgotten long since if it were not a magnificent poem. And so I have elected to stress the metrical texts and to base this treatise on a careful reading of those texts somewhat in the spirit of Heinrich Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History*.⁴²

A word is also in order concerning the bibliographical citations in the footnotes. An effort has been made to introduce only such titles as have a direct bearing on the discussion, since the enumeration of scholarly articles, etc., which pertain to the matter in hand would expand the notes into a veritable telephone directory. Even so it is necessary to confess to certain lacunae which result either from the writer's imperfect scholarship or from necessity. For example: I am convinced that the practice of the Jesuit schools, in which play acting and ode recitation were important educational functions, had a profound effect upon the English educational system and so upon pro-

⁴² Translated by M. D. Hottinger (New York, 1932).

sodic experiment; but exploration of these relationships has only just begun, and my own conclusions are at present too vague to justify their inclusion in a treatise like this. Again, I have thought it unnecessary to discourse at any length upon the ancient classical writers. Though I enjoyed a fairly thorough training in Greek and Latin and have read Pindar in the original (I should not relish being quizzed on that Greek at present!), I have nothing to say on the subject which the reader would not find stated with incomparably greater authority in standard books on classical verse.

Corroborating my remarks on English prosody by reference to those made by other writers is also a real difficulty. I have decided to include Saintsbury in the bibliographical references and to omit a host of others. It is true that the author of *A History of English Prosody* has a good many blind spots, that his system of scansion is a bit elementary, and that he can be willful, careless, and eccentric. Yet it seems to me that nobody else has sensed so well the marvelous unity of English verse or has been so willing to objectivize his own responses to the beauty of a line or image. Undoubtedly there are abler prosodists—Robert Bridges, for example. But Saintsbury would never have been guilty of Bridges's captious remarks concerning Dryden.⁴³ When, therefore, the reader finds allusions to Saintsbury in the notes, I hope he will not jump to the conclusion that no other writers on prosody have been consulted with profit.

An apology must be offered finally for the extreme compression of the treatment. When one begins a study like this, one can have little conception of the labyrinths which investigation will reveal. More than two hundred years of English poetic history are here surveyed for what they will reveal of the fortunes of a form; and there is scarce another kind of history which is so rich and varied. Indeed, had I known what lay ahead when I began this tour of investigation, I should not

⁴³ *Collected Essays, Papers, etc., of Robert Bridges*, No 10 (London, 1932).

have had the courage to proceed. Nevertheless, there is real satisfaction in having come this far, if only because one realizes how very much would be revealed by further exploration.

CHAPTER TWO: *The Ode Prior to John Milton*

WE SHALL NOW ask two important questions: how was the practice of ode writing introduced into England; and what were the fruits of that practice during the Renaissance period? It is immediately obvious that the channel could not have been either the humanism of the universities or the popular verse tradition.¹

Little time was wasted by scholars of the early Tudor period on mere amorousness or even lyric feeling. There was no copy of Catullus in Colet's library;² Terence was widely frowned upon; and Horace was read for the sake of the Satires and Epistles. Greek authors were hungrily sought out by men anxious to possess culture in its pristine form,³ but it was a rare and possibly tainted soul that strayed from Aristotle, Plato, and Sophocles to the demesne staked out by Sappho and Anacreon. Doubtless the universities were not wholly without justification, having their meed of trouble with Lydias and Chloes in the flesh. Warton⁴ pointed out long ago that during the fifteenth century a deluge of metrical systems was visited

¹ The period in question is discussed in detail by Shafer, *The English Ode to 1660*. If the ground is covered again here, far too rapidly and succinctly, the reason is not that I would detract from the many merits of Professor Shafer's treatise but that my findings differ so noticeably from his that I find it necessary to describe them for the sake of the discussion to follow. The reader is requested to turn to Shafer for a discussion of individual poems and of prosodic structure.

² See *Early Tudor Poetry*, by John M. Berdan (New York, 1935), pp. 90 ff.

³ See *The Boke Named the Governour*, by Sir Thomas Elyot, edited by H. H. S. Croft (London, 1883). Elyot's educational ideas are well summarized in *The Education of Shakespeare*, by George A. Plimpton (London, 1933), pp. 7 ff.

⁴ *History of English Poetry*, I, 441.

upon England; and even without them prosody would have remained an essential part of grammar. Nevertheless the pedagogical routine which surrounded the young scholar had not greatly changed, though some might complain that the new learning had undermined the medieval curriculum.⁶ It is probably true that teachers of grammar noted how the trend was turning from accent and rhyme towards quantity—that utopian goal which Petrarch encouraged so many to look upon as the open sesame to a golden future of poetry.

The popular verse tradition was, for its part, affected to some extent by the work of fastidious courtly writers, but it had remained on the whole loyal to the "ballad," which was almost anything that rhymed or could be sung to a tune. The jig, carol, and similar metrical arrangements corresponded roughly to the variations of the *chanson* in France, but the polished troubadour forms had either disappeared or been corrupted. Wyatt's ballade was grossly misprinted,⁶ and very few other Tudor writers attempted the form. What popular balladmongers did to the rondeau, the virelay, and other Gallic favorites baffles description. Prosody seemed to have deteriorated into a habit of drumming out laborious hexameters and elegiacs in school and of writing poulter's measure afterward.⁷ Nevertheless, the ballad writers had one thing on

⁶ The curriculum had been reorganized by royal decree, first under Edward VI and then (1565) under Elizabeth. See *History of the University of Oxford*, by Charles Edward Mallet (London, 1924 et seq.), Vol. II, *passim*. But the teaching of poetry appears to have been little affected. For a discussion of the medieval poetic, see Charles Sears Baldwin, *Mediaeval Rhetoric and Poetic* (New York, 1928), and *Three Mediaeval Centuries of Literature in England* (Boston, 1932), especially Chapter VII. On the history of accentual prosody and its implications, see *The Romanesque Lyric*, by Philip Schuyler Allen (Chapel Hill, 1928), especially Chapters V and VI. For an example of the academic verse of the period, see the "Carmen gratulatorium" in *In adventum illustrissimi Lecestrensis comitis ad collegium Lincolnense* (1585), which consisted of eight elegiac lines.

⁶ See *English Literature during the Lifetime of Shakespeare*, by Felix E. Schelling (New York, 1921), p. 21. But George Gascoigne has a ballade, though it is not so designated, in *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*, see Chalmers, II, 482.

⁷ See *A History of English Prosody*, by George Saintsbury (London, 1923), Vol. I Book IV Chapter III.

their side—music, which was often combined with the dance. As the word "ballad" indicates, verse had originally been associated with rhythmic movement and was still often a dialogue between a girl and her lover which could be partly acted out. When staged before an audience, it became a jig;⁸ and when all hands joined in, it might be a carol.⁹

During Elizabeth's time, this folk poetry was violently attacked from several different points of view. It was the "swing" of that age: the educated and the austere would have none of it, and even the popular writers themselves began to doubt the worth of their wares. The broadside ballad continued to appear, of course.¹⁰ But efforts were made to acquire respectability by labeling one's effusion a "sonet" or a "historie." A good instance of the troubled poetic conscience is *A Courtlie Controversie of Cupid's Cautels*.¹¹ The author grasps at fashionable conventions as best he can and usually misses. "Ditties," "brawles," and "galliardes" give way eventually to a sonnet—a "dissevered sonnet" of thirty-two lines. The singer, Floradine, is introduced as he "half in despaire, beganne one evening to tune his accustomed instrument, whereupon he sang this Sonet, using the Italian accent very cunningly with comely gestures." ¹²

⁸ See *The Elizabethan Jig*, by Charles Read Baskerville (Chicago, 1929), especially pp. 3, 10-11, 31, 32

⁹ See the Introduction in *Christmas Carols of the Sixteenth Century*, edited by Edward Bliss Read (Cambridge, Mass., 1932)

¹⁰ Joseph Ritson, in *Ancient Songs and Ballads from the Reign of King Henry the Second to the Revolution* (London, 1877), p. lxxxvi, held that the "vulgar" could only paste the broadsides on their walls, a method hardly calculated to ensure their preservation. But many survived. See *Ancient Ballads and Broad-sides . . . Preserved in the Library of Henry Huth, Esq.* (London, 1867), and for titles of the era under consideration, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640*, Arber, pp. 37 ff. An example of the "lowly ballad" is "The Song of the Constable," made to the tune of "Jump to Me, Cousin," by James Gyffon, reprinted in *The Elizabethan Underworld*, edited by A. V. Judges (London, 1930), p. 448

¹¹ London, 1578. Another example is *The Posie of Gilliflowers*, by Humphrey Gifford (1580), edited by Grosart as Vol. I of *Occasional Issues of Unique and Very Rare Books* (London, 1875). Gifford offers translations from "Clement Marott" and other French poets.

¹² *A Courtlie Controversie*, p. 283.

Still more interesting is *A Banquet of Daintie Conceits* which Anthony Munday published in 1588.¹³ Munday was a modest soul, given to no untoward pretensions. "Lastly," he says in his Preface, "if any Dittie shall chance to lympe a little in the Note . . . yet I pray thee condemne mee not, in that I have no iote of knowledge in Musique, but what I have donne and do is onely by the eare." His list is varied enough, including a "Courtlye Daunce called Les guanto di Hispania"; a "very gallant note, called the Earle of Oxenford's Marche"; and "the Countess of Ormond's galliard." It is of the greatest interest to compare Munday's list with the contents of the *Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, to which Byrd contributed his "The Earle of Oxford's Marche."¹⁴ It is true, to be sure, that however great may be the names Munday rolls on the tip of his tongue, the *Daintie Conceits* are very much the fare of average citizens.

These symptoms of a desire to conform with higher standards were generated by the tone set at Elizabeth's Court, where learning and refinement were fostered once more after a long interregnum of religious conflict. Never had there been a sovereign more benign to the Muses, in all but financial ways, than Elizabeth.¹⁵ Ascham praised her Greek; that she wrote verses was no secret;¹⁶ and her nobles were impoverished trying to entertain her with the most elaborate pageantry. She was also passionately fond of music, and played the lute herself. The composer's art enjoyed an extraordinary vogue. "If," writes Fellowes, "the supremacy passed for a

¹³ *A Banquet of Daintie Conceits Furnished with Verie Delicate and Choyse Inventions to Delight Their Mindes, Who Take Pleasure in Musique* (London, 1588) Munday could claim the Earl of Oxford for his patron

¹⁴ *The Fitzwilliam Virginal Book*, edited by J A Fuller Maitland and W B Squire (London, 1899)

¹⁵ See *Queen Elizabeth*, by J E Neale (New York, 1935), *passim* Francis Meres, in *Palladis Tamia* (London, 1598), p 284, writes "so Elizabeth our dread Sovereign and gracious Queene is not only a liberal Patron unto Poets, but an excellent Poet herselfe"

¹⁶ See the list of her "works" in *A Catalogue of the Royal and Noble Authors of England*, by Horace Walpole, edited by J Ritson (London, 1759), I, 103.

short time early in the sixteenth century to the musicians of the Lowlands and Italy, it reverted once again to England in the latter years of that century. Fairfax, Taverner, Tallis, and Tye are among the names which form links in the chain that binds the school of Dunstable to that of the Elizabethans, and when we reach the year 1600 we find that there are as many as six Englishmen in the very highest rank of musical composition."¹⁷ This success was based upon the gradual discovery of fixed and beautiful forms on which a scholarly tradition of musical composition could lavish its skill. Thus *Musica Transalpina* (1588) gave England the madrigal.¹⁸ And the song, which Byrd would have "well and artificially made,"¹⁹ followed the example set by Wyatt and Surrey, after various other models had been tried. In the end the lyrics written for the Elizabethan songbooks were worthy of their settings.

Because popular English poetry was so intimately bound up with music, the literary culture of the Court could seep down to the masses far more easily than would otherwise have been the case. It rather quickly became fashionable to denounce the "balladmongers" and to proclaim the birth of a new culture and literature. Not everybody was as urbane as Nicholas Breton, who attributed the scourge of bad verse to human nature.²⁰ Nashe wrote, "Hence come our babbling Bal-

¹⁷ *The Heritage of Music*, edited by Hubert J. Foss (London, 1933), p. 2. That the public often failed to appreciate the better music is shown, for example, by Shakespeare's criticism of the inattentive prior to the performance of such music. That is the sense of Lorenzo's famous lines in *The Merchant of Venice*, V, 1, 70 ff. And in *Twelfth Night*, II, iv, 188 ff., the Duke says almost apologetically about the "old and antique song".

Methought it did relieve my passion much,
More than the light airs and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times

¹⁸ The madrigal is important here as one form of verse suited to refined musical settings. The ode was, of course, another such form.

¹⁹ Byrd's Preface to *Psalmes, Songs and Sonets* (London, 1611). See *William Byrd*, by E. H. Fellowes (London, 1936), p. 159.

²⁰ He wrote in *Fantasticks*. "Oh, 'tis a world to see how life leapes about the limbs of the healthful, none but finds something to doe . . . the Poet, to make

lets, and our new found Songs and Sonets, which every rednose Fidler hath at his fingers end, and every ignorant Ale Knight will breath forth over the pottle, as soone as his braine waxes hotte." ²¹ Webbe ²² was more judicious; and in the diatribes of Marston one senses the flash of genuine moral indignation. Marston was in essence a highly effective editorial writer. This was straight from the shoulder:

Goe buy some ballad of the Faery King,
And of the beggar wench, some rogie thing,
Which thou maist chaunt unto the chamber-maid
To some vile tune, when that thy Maister's laid.²³

But now there appeared a force which was hostile to the popular song and dance and hostile also to the cultural activities of the Court. This was the moral indignation which the Puritanical spirit flung at the worldliness of high and low alike. There was, for example, Thomas Becon (or Beacon), a fiery iconoclast who held that "Antichrist sitteth in his castells and towers with minstrelsy, laughter and al kinde of melodye." ²⁴ In part these imprecations were due to the fact that Becon regarded music as an integral portion of a well-buttressed system of vice:

/ Beware of baudy ballades beware the singing
Beware also of fylthy dauncing

Verses, the Player to conne his part, and the Musitian to try his note." In *A Mad World, My Masters, and Other Prose Works* by Nicholas Breton (London, Cresset Press, 1929), I, 43

²¹ See *The Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589), in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, edited by G. Gregory Smith (Oxford, 1904), p. 326.

²² *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (Arber), p. 36

²³ See *The Scourge of Villanie* (1599), edited by G. B. Harrison (London, 1925). Marston also writes (p. 95) anent a "tinkling Pewterer"

That ever hack'd and hew'd our native tongue

. . . the vildest stumbling stutrer

Shakespeare likewise contributed his bit in *Henry IV*, Part I "And I have not ballads made on you all and sung to filthy tunes, let a cup of sack be my poison" (I, ii, 45 ff.), and "I had rather be a kitten and cry mew Than one of those same metre ballad mongers" (III, i, 28 ff.)

²⁴ *The Third Part of the Bokes Which Thomas Beacon Hath Made* (London, 1560), fol. ccc c

Beware agayne of uncleane kyssing
For these things wyl make thee to —²⁵

3

That was an assault upon the "ballad" from a strategic position. Nor did Becon stand alone. A generation of the godly was in the background.

Accordingly, the Elizabethans who shared the new zest for culture but were also deeply sympathetic with the spirit of the reformers were moved to seek a fusion of the two in a new art that would be both aristocratic and moral. Thus Sidney went on to write his noble *Apologie for Poetry*, arguing that the lyric impulse might well be employed "in singing the prayes of the immortall goodness of that God who gyveth us hands to write and wit to conceive."²⁶ And in a similar mood John Case or someone else completed that admirable book, *The Praise of Musicke*,²⁷ in which Augustinian convictions are ardently reasserted. But, above all, the vision of the new art curbed the sensuous genius of Edmund Spenser. For each of these men, the new culture could be based only on the treasures of Italy. Though at the time the Italian Renaissance might be manifesting "a complete indifference in every matter connected with religion, morality and politics,"²⁸ the English still remembered its original ethical upsurging, its zeal for the purification of man in the waters of the spirit.²⁹ They exemplified also that ineradicable difference between Anglo-Saxon

²⁵ *The Second Part of the Bokes Which Thomas Beacon Hath Made* (London, 1560)

²⁶ *Apologie for Poetry*, edited by J. Churton Collins (Oxford, 1907), p. 56. The date of the *Apologie* is probably 1580.

²⁷ *The Praise of Musicke Wherein besides the Antiquitie, Dignitie, Delectation & Use Thereof in Civil Matters, It Is Also Declared the Sober and Lawful Use of the Same in the Congregation and Church of God*, by John Case[?] (Oxford, 1586). See also *Apologiam musices tam vocalis quam instrumentalis et mixtae* (Oxford, 1588), p. 10, where the hypodoric and mixolydian modes are termed those "quae extasim animi raptumque mentis definat in contemplationem rerum divinarum gignunt."

²⁸ *History of Italian Literature*, by Francesco de Sanctis, translated by Joan Redfern (New York, 1931), I, 371.

²⁹ See *Reformation, Renaissance, Humanismus*, by Konrad Burdach (Berlin, 1918).

reticence and Latin frankness which has played its part in every age.³⁰ For Sidney and Spenser, as doubtless for the Countess of Pembroke herself, the issue was (I think) not exclusiveness in the aesthetic sense but moral responsibility. They believed Trissino, but they also believed Becon. The poet who served God must create a kind of liturgy worthy of his task and proof against attack on the score of grossness.³¹ Therefore he clung to Petrarch and Pico della Mirandola, to Ariosto and to Dante.³²

This Protestant dignity and decorum were based upon the conviction that humanism could be uplifted and purified. In literary matters Sidney and Spenser followed the Italian poets and prosodists with almost moving fidelity, taking from the French only what was cognate or influenced by the Reform.³³ Like Baif in France, they had their "academy"—their Areopagus. But whereas the French poet convened his *Académie de*

³⁰ Thus, when the League of Nations Assembly was debating measures calculated to stamp out trade in obscene publications, the delegate from Haiti objected that Anglo-Saxons had always been prudes. See *Der Versailler Voelkerbund*, by B. W. von Buelow (Berlin, 1923), p. 111.

³¹ See *Literature of the Italian Renaissance*, by Jefferson Butler Fletcher (New York, 1934), p. 254, where the *Shepherds Calendar* is quoted as considering poetry "rather no art, but a divine gift and heavenly instinct, not to bee gotten by laboure and learning, but adorned with both, and poured into the wit by a certain *enthusiasmos* and celestially inspiration." I cannot hold with Harold Stein that Spenser's attitude in the *Tears of the Muses* was the consequence of looking down on "most contemporary literature unless it was a composition of some one in the courtly circle"; see his *Studies in Spenser's Complaints* (New York, 1934), p. 50. Is not the poet's point of view clearly shown in the lines he attributes to Terpsichore?

The noble harts to pleasures they allure,
And tell their Prince that learning is but vaine,
Faire Ladies loues they spot with thoughts impure,
And gentle minds with lewd delights distaine.
Clerks they to loathly idleness intice,
And fill their bookes with discipline of vice

³² The principal prosodists were Julius Caesar Scaliger, whose *Poetics* appeared in 1561, and Minturno, whose *De poeta* appeared in 1559. See, on this and similar matters, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, by J. E. Spingarn (New York, 1908), pp. 253-81.

³³ See *Poetry in France and England*, by Jean Stewart (New York, 1931), pp. 31-65.

musique et de poésie at his home under the sun of a Royal favor that would ensure an illustrious Academy tradition,³⁴ the English foundation (if it ever became that) died quickly and left behind hardly more than its name.³⁵ In just the same way the innovations of these great poets had no continuers (with a single exception, to be noted), but what they did in the grand style of pastoral and allegorical epic is proof against time. Sidney's experiments in quantitative meters were fruitless, and one reason why this was so may be the fact that they were disassociated from music. And Spenser's great hymns, modeled in all probability on Alamanni's³⁶ adaptations of the Petrarchan *canzone*, stand by themselves, except for their great rival, the magnificent, cloudy *Skia Nuktos* of Chapman.³⁷

The exception is, of course, the *Epithalamion*, like no other poem bearing the same designation in all literature. Woehrmann³⁸ and others have pointed out the guide and the mod-

³⁴ See *Histoire de la langue et de la littérature française*, edited by L. Petit de Julleville (Paris, 1897), III, 265

³⁵ See Schelling, *op cit*, p. 25

³⁶ *Opere toscane di Luigi Alamanni al christianissimo re Francisco Primo* appeared in Lyon during 1552 and 1553. Henri Hauvette, in *Un Exile Florentin à la cour de France au XVI^e siècle* Luigi Alamanni (Paris, 1903), pp. 225-27, contends that after 1530 the more advanced classicists tired of the *canzone* and sought something new. Though Alamanni was upon occasion a Pindarist who translated the Greek words "strophe," "antistrophe," and "epode" into Italian as "ballata," "contrebballata," and "stanza," he preferred the word "hymn" to "ode," "sans qu'on voie clairement la raison." The question as to whether the *canzone* itself was of classical origin and, therefore, derivatively at least an ode is—like so many other problems of Italian poetic genealogy—probably beyond solution. On the general question of the relationship between medieval verse forms and classical models, see, as a sample of a virtually inexhaustible literature, *Geschichte der lateinischen Liebesdichtung*, by Hennig Brinkmann (Halle, 1925).

³⁷ *Skia Nuktos The Shadow of Night Containing Two Poeticall Hymnes Devised by G. C. Gent* (London, 1594). The hymns proper are introduced as interludes. Whether Chapman had any classical model in mind is doubtful. His verse is, however, most interesting as a prototype of the "mystical" as differentiated from the Platonic or Christian "hymn" or "ode." See *The School of Night*, by M. C. Bradbrook (Cambridge, 1936), and the literature there cited.

³⁸ *Die englische Epithalamiendichtung der Renaissance und ihre Vorbilder* (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 11 ff. The author also sees a parallel with Ronsard.

els: the guide was Minturno and the models were Catullus, Petrarch, and, it may be, Ariosto. But though Minturno had observed that an epithalamium must have at least twelve stanzas because Pindar's numbered that many, and though Petrarch may have contributed this or that touch, the Spenserian masterpiece (and its mate, the *Prothalamion*), with 'its tamed fury of personal passion,'³⁹ is as great a memorial of the English Renaissance as any Tudor building in carved stone. Now the poem seems to us an ode,⁴⁰ if there ever was one, and is often so described in our manuals. But there is not the slightest indication that Spenser thought his poem an ode.⁴¹ It is fashioned of the same half-Platonic, half-Petrarchan substance as his *Four Hymns*; and though he may well have borrowed something from Alamanni, who in turn had experimented with a variation of the Pindaric ode, it is as obvious as it can be that Spenser's model was the *canzone*. Nevertheless our modern feeling about the *Epithalamion* is in part correct. It has the reflective, philosophic, descriptive interests that post-Augustan English odes so frequently deal with; and its long, sinuous stanzas are ideal forms to which many another poet has aspired. Therefore it is worthy of note here that none of our literary habits are based on formal considerations alone, being in part always the products of common patterns of emotion.

The ode proper, when it put in an appearance, was something else entirely. Pierre Ronsard was its progenitor; and it may very well be that its immediate sponsor was Sidney's great rival, the Earl of Oxford. So much has been attributed to this enigmatical figure (including the plays of Shakespeare)⁴² that

³⁹ Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 362

⁴⁰ See, for example, *English Lyric Poetry, 1500-1700*, by Frederic Ives Carpenter (New York, n. d.), p. xxxvii

⁴¹ See *English Odes*, selected by Edmund W. Gosse (New York, 1881), and Perry, *A Study of Poetry*, p. 283.

⁴² "Shakespeare Identified" in *Edward De Vere the Sixteenth Earl of Oxford*, by J. Thomas Looney (New York, 1920), and *The Case for Edward De Vere*, by Percy Allen (London, 1930).

one hesitates to append anything to the list. But the evidence is considerable. First of all, Oxford and Sidney were personal enemies; ⁴³ they were also poets and literary men. When Oxford followed Sidney to the Continent in 1575, he seems to have acquired the Italianate airs which so annoyed Gabriel Harvey ⁴⁴ and possibly shocked Ascham.⁴⁵ Whether or not these sources of opposition broadened to form two hostile literary schools, we do know that the supporters of the Areopagus had enemies,⁴⁶ and that Oxford was the protector of these last. But in 1579 the Earl was, if not a Catholic, committed to the Catholic cause and a French alliance for the Queen.⁴⁷ If Ward is correct, he was lampooned shortly thereafter for putting on French airs.

Then, in 1582, Thomas Watson dedicated the *Passionate Centurie of Love* ⁴⁸ to Oxford; and in that book Ronsard and the ode made their debut in English letters. Watson's is a strange volume, a kind of literary *mixtum compositum* to the modern eye not trained to realize that in earlier Renaissance literature there was seldom any such thing as a "sonnet sequence" in the Wordsworthian sense. Even Petrarch's *In*

⁴³ See *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman*, by Kenneth Orne Myrick (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 27, and the *Contemporary Review*, L, 638, for comment by Edmund Gosse

⁴⁴ *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey*, edited from Sloane MS 93 by E. L. Scott (London, 1884), p. 95. That the passage is aimed at Oxford seems indubitable

⁴⁵ *The Scholemaster* (London, 1570) "I was once in Italie my selfe; but I thank God, my abode there, was but IX dayes, And yet I sawe in that little time, in one Citie, more libertie to sinne, than ever I hard tell of in our noble Citie of London in IX year"

⁴⁶ See *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, by B. M. Ward (London, 1928), p. 185 and *passim*. Here is not the place to evaluate the discussion which has grown up round what has been termed the "Areopagus legend." See *French Influence in English Literature*, by A. H. Upham (New York, 1908), Chapter II. My own opinion is that the Areopagus was a loose but real circle, though it was modeled after Italian humanist coteries even as The Pléiade in its turn had been.

⁴⁷ *Catholic Record Society*, XXI, 29-30

⁴⁸ *The Ekatompathia, or Passionate Centurie of Love, Divided into Two Parts, etc. Composed by Thomas Watson, Gentleman, and Published at the Request of Certaine Gentlemen His Very Friendes* (London, 1582). At the time numerous authors were dedicating their books to Oxford

vita Madonna Laura varies the *sonetto* with other forms;⁴⁹ and a book like *Baif's Mimes*⁵⁰ was a veritable literary ragout, mingling satires, epistles, epigrams, odes. Watson had no highly developed sense of form and was content with his rather plodding Muse so long as he could display his brilliance and his ability to "imitate" the poets of various literatures.⁵¹ Thrice he emerges with imitations of Ronsardian odes. But possibly the best lyric in the book is "An Ode Written to the Muses concerning This Author" by C. Downhalus. It may conceivably be that ~~this~~ was a nom de plume for Oxford, who at all events contributed a sonnet to Watson's posthumous *Tears of Fancy*.⁵²

We know that Watson was a versatile man of letters, who had traveled abroad and studied in the Catholic College at Douai; that he knew The Pléiade, and probably through it the work of the Italian Renaissance; and that he was acquainted with some of the English playwrights.⁵³ Accordingly, it is tempting to see in the relationship between Oxford and Watson a sort of Catholic literary conspiracy to pit Ronsard against Du Bartas, the Huguenot poet whose *Semaine* had appeared in 1578 and won the endorsement of Sidney.⁵⁴ But though religious controversy loomed larger in the background of Elizabethan literature than we were prone to imagine,⁵⁵ there is no strong proof of such a conspiracy. Of course hostility to Puritanism did throw a good many intellectuals and artists into the Catholic camp and kept others wavering on the fence. Yet Elizabethan Catholicism was vastly more complex

⁴⁹ *Le Rime du Francesco Petrarca*, edited by G. Leopardi (Firenze, 1854)

⁵⁰ *Mimes, enseignements et proverbes* (Paris, 1575) contains satires, epistles, epigrams, etc. Of course Ronsard also follows the Petrarchan model, the *Second Livre des amours*, for example, being sprinkled with chansons and madrigals.

⁵¹ See *The Elizabethan Lyric*, by John Erskine (New York, 1931), pp. 125-27.

⁵² The "ode" by "Downhalus" employs a six-line stanza, rhyming *ababcc*. *The Tears of Fancy* (London, 1593) contains only sonnets.

⁵³ See *Christopher Marlowe in London*, by Mark Eccles (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 128-43 and *passim*.

⁵⁴ See *Du Bartas en Angleterre*, by H. Ashton (Paris, 1908).

⁵⁵ See, for example, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age*, by C. J. Sisson (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 4-5, and the Introduction to the Cambridge *Hamlet*.

than a feeling of admiration for the more joyous morals of the Latin races.⁵⁶ Note for example the very rigorous mood that persists from Southwell's *Saint Peter's Complaynt*⁵⁷ to Habington's *Castara*,⁵⁸ both of which quite out-moralize Sidney and Spenser. The Jesuit poet, faithful probably to the teachings of Jacobus Pontanus concerning the "imitation of ancient writers,"⁵⁹ remains partial to the epigram save on the rare occasions when he is borne aloft by religious feeling; and Habington turned from the sober sonnet to the Psalms.

At any rate, we may surmise that the anti-Puritanical literati, eager to get some fun out of life and bored with the ethical ruminations of Sidney, found a champion of parts in Oxford, who in turn may have been twice blest with Watson and Ronsard. Then, in 1584, the association between Oxford and the ode became still closer—though not more obvious—when John Soowthern published *Pandore: the Musique of the Beautie of His Mistress Diana*.⁶⁰ Again the dedication

⁵⁶ See *Mythology and the Renaissance Tradition in English Poetry*, by Douglas Bush (Minneapolis, 1932), and the present writer's comment in the *Com-monweal*, XVII, 194 C S Lewis, in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 64 ff., argues that the reverse was true—that it was from Catholics that the attack on immorality, attributed to their opponents, came. This view is, however, not borne out by the literature of the time. In England accusations were bandied to and fro, as they were in Germany. Protestant writers made a point of denouncing conditions in Catholic Italy and France and beheld in Mary, Queen of Scots, an object lesson. Conversely, Catholic writers denounced what they termed the decline of public and private morality under the new system. Feminine foibles became important tests and are discussed in many treatises which reach a kind of climax in Thomas Hall's *The Loathsomeness of Long Haire* (London, 1654). Puritans in England attacked the stage, but so did Bossuet in France.

⁵⁷ *Saint Peter's Complaynt with Other Poems* (London, 1595). The dedicatory letter says: "In the meane time, with many good wishes I send you these few ditties, add you the tunes, and let the Meane, I pray you, be still a point in all your Musick"—a point worth comparing with Case's doctrine.

⁵⁸ London, 1634.

⁵⁹ Robert Southwell, *the Writer*, by Pierre Janelle (New York, 1935), p. 135 and *passim*. Jacobus Pontanus (Spanmueller) issued *Poeticorum institutionum libri III* in 1594. Here Horace is praised as the ideal lyric writer. See Viotor, *Geschichte der deutschen Ode*, p. 35.

⁶⁰ London, 1584. The book is exceedingly rare. Perhaps the reason is that Queen Elizabeth resented the inclusion of one of her poems and ordered the work suppressed.

is to Oxford. The book offers both "odes" and "odellets," as a result of another levy on "olde Ronsard."⁶¹ The first are the earliest professedly Pindaric odes in English. They are provided with strophe, antistrophe, and epode, and the stanzaic patterns conform roughly with Ronsardian practice. But the metrical handling seems utterly unskilled and the diction is banal. It may, of course, be that Soowthern was consciously retaining that ruggedness of older English verse that would prove so valuable to John Donne. The "odellets," or Ronsardian Horatian odes, are no better. Few books have been damned with greater thoroughness by antiquarians, who unearthed the parallels with Ronsard.⁶² Yet one can well imagine that it must have possessed the charm of novelty for the Elizabethan, who now was shown for the first time in his own language the metrical garb of the great Theban. It is not surprising, after all, that the "Countess of Oxenford" should have contributed four "Epytaphes" to the volume or that Drayton should have found the author deserving of a compliment.⁶³

The Ronsard who thus entered English letters was no poet studied and digested by scholars, but a Ronsard picked up hap-

⁶¹ From the "Odellets"

But first I would thy Bathyll were
Come with her Lute, that we might daunce,
And that our olde Ronsard of France
With his Cassandra too were here

The reference to "olde Ronsard" seems responsible for Tarlton's use of it. Soowthern's "Ode I" summarizes the doctrine of The Pléiade thus.

The ten divers tongues of my Lute,
I will Fredone in thy honour
These renowned songs of Pindar
And imitate for thee Dever
Horace that brave Latine Harper
And nought escapes out of my hand
In this Ode but it's veritee
And heare I sweare Dever 'tis thee
That art ornament of England

That savors, of course, of the fourth epode of "A Jouachim de Bellai Angevin"

⁶² A sheaf of spicy critiques is bound up with the British Museum copy

⁶³ See *Poems, Lyrick and Pastorall*, by Michael Drayton (Spenser Society, 1891), p. 7, "Ode I"

hazardly and seldom taken at his true worth. George Puttenham was, it appears, the sole critical essayist who paid him a tribute.⁶⁴ To the sterner Englishman of that age it would not have seemed doubtful that the productions of the great French bard were to be listed among the world's erotica; and almost immediately the word "ode" was coupled with amorousness. In a letter to Spenser, Gabriel Harvey⁶⁵ denounced an "amorous odious sonnet"; and Puttenham, as has been noted, lauded Sir Walter Raleigh for proficiency in the "dittie and amorous ode." Shakespeare's one use of the word is in the same sense. Dumain, in *Love's Labour's Lost*,⁶⁶ professes his love in an "ode" in the then familiar trochaic ode rhythm.

On the other hand, however, as Puttenham's phrase indicates, the word came to stand for love verses more refined and courtly of substance than the despised ballad. Meres puts the "ode" first among the kinds of poetry in which he says that the Queen excelled.⁶⁷ And in this sense other poets associated with Oxford, notably Robert Greene and Thomas Lodge, employed the term. In their hands it also retained the formal characteristic of trochaic rhythm, though Greene was forever lapsing through force of habit into the iambic measure. But apparently no one felt competent to carry on in Soowthern's Pindaric vein, it may be because the form consorted with no familiar musical setting.

The odes in Greene's prose romances, notably *Philomela* (1592), are rich in tenderness and ethical feeling.⁶⁸ This maiden is of almost Penelopean chastity:

⁶⁴ Haslewood, *Ancient Critical Essays*, I, 211. Puttenham praises Ronsard for having "very well translated" Greek verse

⁶⁵ *Op cit.*, p. 101

⁶⁶ Act IV, scene iii

⁶⁷ *Op cit.*, p. 284. Meres says that her "learned, delicate and noble Muse surmounteth, be it in Ode, Elegy, Epigram or in any other kind of Poem Heroicke or Lyricke"

⁶⁸ For the texts of these and other odes by Greene, see *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, edited by J. Churton Collins (Oxford, 1905), Vol. II. Greene joined the Oxford coterie with the dedication of *Greene's Card of Fancy* (1584). See Ward, *op cit.*, p. 192.

But if a kiss prove unchaste,
 Then is true love quite disgraced.
 Though love be sweet, learn this of me
 No love sweet but honesty.

Never Too Late (1590) is forgotten now, save for the two graceful "Palmer's Odes"; and *Greene's Mourning Garment* (1590) has "Philador's Ode That He Left with the Despairing Lover." Our poet is a hasty borrower, whose labels seem occasionally as fortuitous as his citations of Dante; but his ode structure is uniform, being based on trochaic verse with iambic interlardings rhyming in couplets not always stopped. The infinite care with which Ronsard alternated strong and weak rhymes is missing here,⁶⁹ but one feels that an effort has been made to the same end. Lodge,⁷⁰ whose lyrics—either those of *William Longbeard* (1593) or *Phyllis* (1593)—keep the unmistakable French note, appears to have been the butt of some mirth because of his fidelity to The Pléiade. The following, from Tarlton's *News out of Purgatory* (1590), is the most pertinent sample: "The tale of the painter being ended, passing a little further, I might see where sat a crewe of men that woare baye garlands on their heads, and they were poets; amongst which was olde Ennius. . . . But above them I marked olde Ronsard, and he sat there with a scrowle in his hand, wherein was written the description of Cassandra, his mistress: and because his stile is not common, nor have I heard English poets write in that vaine, marke it, and I will rehearse it, for I have learned it by hart:

Downe I sat,
 I sat downe
 Where Flora had bestowed her graces.
 Greene it was,

⁶⁹ See *The French Renaissance in England*, by Sidney Lee (New York, 1910), p. 218.

⁷⁰ *The Poems of Thomas Lodge* (London, 1819). It may be added that Lodge had embraced the Roman Catholic faith.

It was greene
Far passing other places." ⁷¹

That may indicate what the common impression of Ronsard's style happened to be. If we now turn to the poet himself, we learn that the achievement on which he laid greatest stress was his "discovery" of the ode. It is a little difficult to see why he did so; and after one has sifted the literature on the subject, one concludes: (a) that, as the *Abrégé de l'art poétique françois* ⁷² shows, he was impatient with the low level of popular French verse and anxious to give his country a poetic style worthy of comparison with the classics; (b) that ~~he believed the perfection of classic verse was dependent upon an intimate relationship between poetry and music, which he sought to reproduce; and~~ (c) that to bring about this relationship he sponsored a form that permitted any kind of initial stanza but exacted absolute conformity to the pattern thus given in all subsequent stanzas. I think it is clear from what Tiersot ⁷³ has written that Ronsard's ideal music was a polyphony so constructed that, after the initial stanza had been sung, the poet could then carry on by chanting the *superius* part of the score to the accompaniment of his lute. Nevertheless when all this has been said, it is still not quite clear what the ode form is objectively—apart from initial irregularity and subsequent regularity—though it was undoubtedly for Ronsard subjectively a something as different from and far superior to the *chanson* as could be well imagined. ⁷⁴ ~~The ode was art; the chanson improvisation~~

⁷¹ Tarlton's *Jests and News out of Purgatory*, edited by James O Halliwell (London, 1844), p 88 A H Bullen, in *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical From Romances and Prose-Tracts of the Elizabethan Age* (London, 1890), p xi, supposes the target to have been Lodge Naturally it may also have been Greene, as the parody itself would seem to imply

⁷² Written in 1565 See *Pierre Ronsard—l'art poétique cinq préfaces*, edited by Jean Stewart (Cambridge, 1930)

⁷³ *Ronsard et la musique de son temps* (Paris, 1903), pp 7 ff, 41 ff. Tiersot reprints (pp 16–18) the important Preface which the poet wrote for *Mellange de chansons tant de vieux auteurs que de modernes* in 1572.

⁷⁴ This unfortunate hiatus was not bridged over by any of the other French

This element of subjectivity inevitably played a still greater role in England, where few were sticklers for nomenclature.⁷⁵

ode writers, as a matter of course. A convenient text is Ronsard, *Œuvres complètes*, edited by Gustave Cohen (Paris, 1938). *Ronsard, poète lyrique*, by Paul Laumonier (Paris, 1909), discusses fully the question of Ronsard's quarrel with Du Bellay and others over the title to fame as the originator of the French ode (p. xxxi), the Ronsardian ideas of music (pp. 85 ff.), and the principles governing the Ronsardian ode. Laumonier is still the best guide to these knotty problems. Tiersot, *op. cit.*, gives an account of the music written to accompany Ronsard's verse, and this I have to some extent compared with the items in the collection of *chanson* music in the British Museum. *Ronsard et son temps*, by Pierre Champion (Paris, 1925), discusses the manner in which The Pleiade was initiated into the mysteries of Greek classical verse. *Die poetischen Theorien des Plejade nach Ronsard und Dubellay*, by A. Rosenbauer (Erlangen, 1895), makes the point that though these poets derived their views in part from the ancients, they nevertheless relied chiefly upon the Italian humanists. *The Influence of Ariosto's Epic and Lyric Poetry on Ronsard and His Group*, by Alice Cameron (Baltimore, 1930), studies one important aspect of the relations between The Pleiade and the Italians. The author says (p. 179) that although Ariosto's influence in France was at its height between 1550 and 1560, "Ronsard, and his disciples after him, continued to imitate the *Orlando* and the *Opere minori* for at least forty years longer." Pierre de Nolhac, in *Le Correspondant*, Vol. CCLXXXIII, No. 1406, pp. 17 ff., believes that with Trissino music ceased to go hand in hand with poetry in Italy and that Ronsard worked in the spirit of resistance to this trend. For a general survey of the situation as a whole, see the views expressed by Karl Borinski in *Die Poetik der Renaissance und die Anfänge der literarischen Kritik in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1886) and *Die Antike in Poetik und Kunsttheorie* (Leipzig, 1914). See also, as a modern poet's view, the Preface to *Sonnets pour Hélène*, by Pierre Ronsard, with English renderings by Humbert Wolfe (New York, 1934).

⁷⁵ The instability of the sonnet form is discussed by Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, Vol. II, Chapter IV. Greene's sonnets may have fourteen lines or more; Watson's are often a trio of six-line stanzas. James Howell sent "Mr Tho M" a "sonnet" of four eight-line stanzas, for "your Clorinda" who, he had heard, "hath some skill in music." See *Epistolae Ho-Eliaenae* (Boston, 1907), I, 379-80. Lodge's *sonetto*, as employed in *Euphues Golden Legacie* (London, 1642), has eleven rhyming tetrameter couplets. The Miscellanies afford still more varied fare. Puttenham, in *Haslewood*, *op. cit.*, II, 61, tries to solve the problem by holding that "song" is "our naturall English word," while carol, ditty, etc., come from the French, and the rest "such as time and usurpation by custome have allowed us out of the primitive Greek and Latine . . . as Ode, Epitaphie, Elegie, Epigramme and other moe." One must not, however, rush to the conclusion that for Elizabethan poets the words were mere synonyms, as Hyder Edward Rollins suggests—see his edition of *Britton's Bowre of Delights* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), p. xx. "Ode" and "song" were, it is true, often interchangeable. Yet "ode" was also upon occasion a distinct term.

What Ronsard and others, particularly the humanist Latin poets, had done was in essence to propose for imitation the great bards of antiquity. But there were only two ways in which this could be done. Either one could follow the model slavishly, and seek to reproduce even the classical metrical schemes, or one might (as Ronsard himself had done) try to create, in the vernacular, verse forms handled with the flawless perfection of the ancients. But England was far from boasting a school of poetic instruction such as Dorat had established in France⁷⁶ or even a tradition of prosodic inquiry such as the Jesuit teachers had developed in their schools.⁷⁷ Its lyric poets clung to an aesthetic dominated by the glory of a great music and the splendor of a language emerging from chaos and still encrusted with huge, glittering deposits of Latin. Nevertheless, all the evidence, though admittedly there is none too much of it, indicates the validity of the following conclusions: that the idea of ode writing goes back to The Pléiade, and to Ronsard in particular; that the pattern of an irregular first stanza repeated throughout the poem was copied by the English writers from Ronsard; and that to him also we owe the fact that Pindar became not only a great name but a poetic model.

The French example is shown quite clearly in the so-called sonnet sequences. In Lodge's *Phyllis*, the charming ode which begins "Now I Find Thy Looks Were Feigned"⁷⁸ comes after forty sonnets. The collection is as heavily sprinkled with songs as any of Ronsard's own miscellanies. And finally we

⁷⁶ See *Studies in the French Renaissance*, by Arthur Tilley (Cambridge, 1922), I, 219-28. Tilley refers to the charge against Dorat that he stressed the most difficult Greek authors and adds "They are difficult, it is true, especially Pindar and Aeschylus, but . . . they combine high poetic imagination with an unflinching sense of style, and this was just what French poetry needed in order to raise it to a higher plane than it had reached in the hands of Marot."

⁷⁷ On their greatest poet, Jakob Balde, see Viator, *op. cit.*, pp. 35 ff.

⁷⁸ Text of the ode in *The Oxford Book of Sixteenth Century Verse*, p. 405. For the sequence as a whole, see *Elizabethan Sonnet Sequences*, edited by Martha Foote Crow (London, 1896 et seq.).

know that the ode just mentioned was set to music by John Ford—this being the first actual proof of consonance between the English ode and music.⁷⁹ Now the year 1593 was rich in similar collections. *Licia*, attributed to Giles Fletcher, the elder, also has an ode that comes after forty sonnets.⁸⁰ And in Samuel Daniel's *Deha*, which was published the following year, the "Ode" comes after fifty sonnets.⁸¹ We know that Daniel's ode was set to music by John Farmer⁸² and may assume that Fletcher's received a similar setting. Such resemblances point to a common origin, whatever it may have been. Metrically, these odes have some differences. Lodge, heritor of the Euphuists and their art of antithetical statement, points the way towards the dainty verbal balance of the seventeenth century; Daniel, who substitutes an *ababab* sestet for the couplet, is chaster and more epigrammatical; and Fletcher writes couplets minus distinction but keeps also to the trochaic rhythm and adds internal rhyme. I think we may say, therefore, that the French custom inspired two things in Elizabethan England: first, the practice of setting odes to music (the genuine sonnet was seldom so treated); second, a tentative identification of the ode with a poem written in trochaic couplets, lavishly adorned with feminine rhymes.⁸³

It is true that no rules were laid down or observed. Thus—also in 1593—Barnabe Barnes published *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, as varied a nosegay as Baif's *Passetemps* of twenty years previous and of great interest to students of prosody. A man who can write,

⁷⁹ In *Music of Sundry Kinds* (London, 1607)

⁸⁰ *Licia, or Poemes of Love, in Honour of the Admirable and Singular Vertues of His Lady* (London, 1593), text of the ode, p. 54

⁸¹ *The Poetical Works of Mr Samuel Daniel* (London, 1718), II, 418

⁸² In *First Set of English Madrigals* (London, 1599).

⁸³ The principal French lyric poets to have influenced English writers were, in addition to Ronsard, Du Bellay, Desportes, and Baif. Du Bellay proposed, however, another code of prosodic rule. See *Poésies françaises et latines de Joachim du Bellay*, edited by E. Courbet (Paris, 1918), I, 1-10

\ Musique it selfe in joyntes of her fayre fingers is:
 \ She chauntress of fingers is,⁸⁴

is bound to be remembered. Barnes's collection includes twenty odes, most of them brief and two of them seemingly based on classical models. He tries hard to handle the lighter French measures, for example, the charming stanza Ronsard selected for his "Ode to Calliope." The effect is quaint rather than pleasant, though it is quite possible that Barnes's lute made up for what the diction of his dimeters lacked.⁸⁵ He appears to have identified "ode" with "song" and to have entertained a fondness for foreign labels. At will he is iambic or trochaic, and he favors rhyme schemes more intricate than the couplet. Barnes's indifference to formalistic matters is characteristic also of the Elizabethan Miscellanies.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ *Parthenophil and Parthenope*, by Barnabe Barnes, edited by A B Grosart (London, 1875) The quotation is from "Canzon I" One of the odes is entitled "Carmen Anacreonticum", another, "An Asclepiad."

⁸⁵ See Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 151-52

⁸⁶ The Miscellanies differ in no essential way from the collections mentioned Whether they be printed "scrapbooks" made by careful collectors of verse, the judicious gleanings of editors not too busy to read, or the collective enterprises of poets who could thus share the costs of printing, the verse forms, themes, and standards set are seldom different from those adopted by the individual poets of the time Perhaps *A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*, which bears the name of George Gascoigne, is really a Miscellany At any rate, the first edition (1576) is characteristic of the period in that it contains no mention of the ode Britton's *Bowre of Delights* (1591) also does not use the word and is notable primarily for the looseness with which the term "sonnet" is employed England's *Helicon*, edited by E Brydges and J Haslewood (London, 1815), is a beautiful book but serves the present purpose only negatively by showing that no clear distinction was made between "ode" and "song" Richard Barnfield's "Shepherd's Ode" (a revised version of which appeared in Barnfield's *Poems in Divers Humours*, London, 1615) is akin to Lodge Edmund Bolton contributed a "Pastoral Ode," iambic and spiced with a dash of mythology, as well as a "Palinode," which is properly a lyric written to recant what has been said in a previous ode But by comparison with these, how rich in color and music are the lyrics which have been developed out of the old popular forms! Clearly, in England the highly developed art of music overshadowed poetry and led it by the hand to an especial kind of perfection. That separation between verse and music against which Ronsard had protested did not exist in England. Indeed, there was always some danger lest the melody weigh heavier than the ditty—that, in short, the temptation which

Therewith we come to the vexing problem of Pindar. The *editio princeps* of the surviving odes appeared in 1513; and though a number of other editions followed during the century, nothing proves that the Greek poet was actually read in England until after the dawn of the seventeenth century.⁸⁷ To many literary men of the period he was merely a name. Puttenham⁸⁸ refers vaguely to the "hymns of Pyndarus," Lodge⁸⁹ mentions his name, and Meres⁹⁰ lists him in a brief catalogue of those who made the Greek tongue "famous and eloquent." It is highly probable that even Gabriel Harvey had no clear notion of who "Pindarus" had been.⁹¹ Ascham may have read some Pindaric verse, but if so his comment does

had visited St Augustine would ensnare all Britons *A Poetical Rhapsody* (1602) is again a medley of nearly all the verse forms. The Preface, presumably by Francis Davison, explains that he and his brother Walter had written "these Toyes" years ago, indicating thus that the odes in the book date from the period between 1580 and 1594, when ode writing as the Elizabethans understood it was in flower. Here is, if one excepts Soowthern, the only extant example of an Elizabethan ode sequence, and its memorable daintiness were proof enough, if that were needed, that the age remained (outside the playhouses) one not of robustious speech but of reticence and almost sensitive regard for moral values. Yet, even so, the Davison odes are so much like songs—the songs, for example, in John Dowland's *Second Book of Songs or Ayres* (1600)—that it is apparent once more that music dominated the literary scene. A word may be added concerning one of the strangest of all poem sequences—*Caelica*, which must have been written by Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, before 1590, though it did not appear until 1633 (*The Works in Verse and Prose Complete of the Rt Hon Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke*, edited by A. B. Grosart, Private, 1870). Brooke, one of Sidney's most loyal friends, was (as Grosart observes) following the example of *Astrophel and Stella*. But whereas this separates the quatorzains from "other sonnets of variable verse," *Caelica* places all side by side, so that the word "sonnet" comes to have a dozen meanings. Sidney was following the advice of Dante in the *De vulgari eloquentia* that poetic variety can be sought by deviating from set patterns of line and stanza. Brooke is far more Roman. It is true that his Sapphics are still cumbrous of phrasing, but his choriambics are often elastically melodious in a way rivaled by no other poet of the time. He also has trochaic couplets rivaling Lodge's. In short, Brooke is a summary of the metrical impulses which led to one kind of ode writing, and he points to those which would give rise to still another kind.

⁸⁷ Shafer, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-78.

⁸⁸ In Haslewood, *op. cit.*, I, 211.

⁸⁹ Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

⁹⁰ Meres, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

⁹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 67.

not reflect the experience.⁹² Case cites Pindar⁹³ to make the point that there is "a hidden vertue which is between our souls and musicke," but he was in all probability borrowing the quotation from some other author. Sidney's *Apologie* is the only Elizabethan essay I know that reflects a deeper interest in the great Theban.⁹⁴ But Sidney, who appears to have had no Greek, may have been echoing some humanist treatise on rhetoric or poetics. One may add that Ronsard and Pindar were occasionally named together.⁹⁵

These facts are not surprising. The "young schollers" to whom Camden refers⁹⁶ happened to be more taken with "Ecchos, Acrostics, Serpentine verses" and so forth than they were with the Pythian or Nemean odes, which was entirely natural. Pindar is difficult reading, even after a stiff Greek course. Tradition has it that in 1500 Lillye became the first teacher of Greek in England,⁹⁷ and thereafter a number of eminent scholars devoted themselves to the subject, including George Etheridge, reputed to have set English, Latin, and Greek verses to his harp "with the greatest skill." Moreover, the Queen herself took a course in Greek under Ascham, who praised her diligence; and it is difficult to see how anyone could have followed as she did the sermons of Bishop Lancelot Andrewes without some grounding in the tongue.

Three reasons have been traditionally given for the excellence of Pindar. First, the structure of the formal Greek

⁹² *Op cit*, p. 119 Ascham says in part "For joyning Virgil with Homer I have sufficiently declared before. The like diligence I would wish to be taken in Pindar and Horace an equal match for all respects"

⁹³ Case, *op cit*, p. 53

⁹⁴ *Op cit*, p. 32 Sidney says in part "And where a man may say that Pindar many times prayseth highly victories of small moment, matters rather of sport than vertue, as it may be aunswered, it was the fault of the Poet, not of the Poetry" On Sidney's knowledge of Greek, see *Sir Philip Sidney as a Literary Craftsman*, by Kenneth Orne Myrick (Cambridge, Mass., 1935), p. 93.

⁹⁵ For example, Puttenham, in Haslewood, *op cit*, I, 211

⁹⁶ *Remaines concerning Britaine* (London, 1614), p. 345.

⁹⁷ Warton, *op. cit*, III, 109.

ode, which, as we know it, was written to laud victorious athletic contestants and combined the high arts of verse, song, and rhythmic dance. Modern commentators observe that Pindar was, with Bacchylides, the master of a form which had a long and distinguished history.⁹⁸ But whereas Bacchylides was famed for the perfection with which he observed the rules laid down for the form, Pindar introduced a marked note of individuality. It was not that he broke the mould: he merely poured into it materials, linguistic and emotional, that were his own. The Pindaric odes, too, are firm and uniform. Strophe and antistrophe are repeated; epode conforms with epode. Opportunity for originality came in the casting of the basic stanzas and in the choice of figures. In modern times many poets and critics have dreamed of restoring the antique symmetry of the paean, which was a glorification of the gods and of men, a wedding of sound and motion in a moment of ecstasy in which all the senses were purified and exalted.

Then, second, there was the majestic concentrated phrasing, at one and the same time balanced against meaning in the true Grecian way and leaping out of the dark of personal experience into the light of universal validity. It was this which had fascinated Ronsard, though perhaps his Pindarics succeed only in revealing their author's zest in violent images and explosive lines. The German Hoelderlin⁹⁹ is doubtless the greatest of the moderns whom the language of the Theban has thus enchanted—a mystic who felt, as few have felt, the rapture of sublime speech hammered out of the rock of elemental human utterance, still aglow with the heat of volcanic origins and not with the borrowed fires of rhetoric. Cowley saw what was there, but to him it suggested the onward sweep of baroque

⁹⁸ See *Griechische Verskunst*, by U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (Berlin, 1921).

⁹⁹ *Friedrich Hoelderlin's saemmtliche Werke*, edited by Christoph Theodor Schwab (Stuttgart, 1846). This is the first edition but it does not contain the translations of the Pindaric odes. For these see *Hoelderlin Gesammelte Werke* (Potsdam, 1922). See also "Der Weg zu Hoelderlin," by Elsbet Linspels, in *Hochland*, June, 1938, pp. 226-36.

rhapsody. England has never had a poet like Hoelderlin. Father Gerard Hopkins comes nearest, perhaps, but his verse grafts Aeschylus on Old English.¹⁰⁰

The third and final concern was with the things Pindar stood for, and these were rather hastily summed up as "wildness" and "loftiness." Modern historians demonstrate that while the Theban upheld the claims of "inspiration" against those of "art," his conception of the first was not something divorced from reason but illuminated by it.¹⁰¹ But to the Renaissance and more especially to the neoclassicists, Pindar was possessed by a holy fury which dictated oracular utterances. Yet though misconceptions have prevailed on this score, all the ages have bowed to Quintilian's dictum that Pindar was the greatest lyric poet by reason of the fact that the loftiness of his ethical thinking found expression in splendid diction.¹⁰² The Elizabethans had, however, little to say on either subject. What John Bodenham writes about the poet as a "Fore-seer" is pretty tame; ¹⁰³ and though Sidney does speak of the poet as a *vates*, the example he gives is David.¹⁰⁴ It seems likely that what the age generally knew of Pindar was

¹⁰⁰ *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Robert Bridges (2d edition, London, 1931) Note especially "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (pp 11-23) and the "Epithalamion" (pp 89-90) In a letter to Bridges, dated June 7, 1882, Hopkins wrote "You perhaps forget my mentioning my beginning an ode in honour of Fr Edmund Campion's martyrdom Little is done, but I hope to be able to go on with it and that it will not be inferior to the two other odes It is dithyrambic or what they used to call Pindaric (which as we have Pindar now is unPindaric) I mean in variable stanzas and not antistrophic, like *Alexander's Feast* or *Lycidas*" See *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, edited with notes and an Introduction by Claude Collier Abbott (London, 1935)

¹⁰¹ For example, *Literary Criticism in Antiquity*, by J W H Atkins (Cambridge, 1934), I, 16

¹⁰² *Institutio oratorica*, Book X, Chapter I Atkins, *op cit*, II, 286, summarizes Quintilian's attitude thus "Of lyric poets Pindar is said to be the greatest by reason of the magnificence of his diction and thought, though Stesichorus, happy in his themes, is also described as a great, if somewhat uncontrolled genius." For Longinus' comment, also influential, see *On the Sublime*, Section XXXIII

¹⁰³ *Politeuphuia Wits' Commonwealth* (London, 1597), p. 52

¹⁰⁴ *Op cit*, p 32.

acquired from Horace. Of course, there were the Italian critics and humanist poets. Trissino had written odes in Pindar's strophic arrangement, and Chiabrera had followed Horace's advice with zeal if not success.¹⁰⁵ More influential than these, Alamanni had produced, as we have noted, an Italianate version of the choral ode.

While, therefore, the reputation of Pindar's name was established in late sixteenth-century England, the urge to follow his example was not deeply implanted in the Elizabethan breast. No doubt one important reason was that the formal ode structure did not consort with established musical traditions. There was no difficulty if the word "ode" meant "amorous ditty." But these long clusters of austere strophes, antistrophes, and epodes were heights up and down which the English Muse had no desire to climb. When Richard Barnfield writes to his friend "in praise of music and poetry," he says:

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
Spenser to me, whose deep conceit is such
As, passing all conceit, knows no defense.¹⁰⁶

And these are really the poles round which the age moves. It was the *canzone*, the hymn, or the epithalamium which, in numerous forms, gave opportunity to those who sought the realm where orchestral diction and melody were imaginatively one.

But then there came, at the end of the century, a moment of change, when the intellect protested against too much romance. Possibly the transition had its source in the legal, political, and religious dialectic fostered by the time. There is a great deal of such dialectic in the Shakespearean plays. And men like Jonson, Donne, and Sir John Davies preferred a kind

¹⁰⁵ *A History of Classical Scholarship*, by John Edwin Sandys (Cambridge, 1908), II, 281 ff

¹⁰⁶ In *Poems in Divers Humours* (1598), text in *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, p. 239

of antithesis wholly different from that between a lover and an unwilling maid or that between reality and dream. When Jonson praises music, he conceives of it as "order" and "harmony."¹⁰⁷ When Davies writes a sonnet, he usually has in mind a lampoon. And Donne's is, of course, a wit that often coils itself round a theme as thread is spun about a spool. Now an age of classical imitation could begin, for the kind of genius which would manifest itself could find in antiquity alone the rules which could curb its lawlessness.¹⁰⁸

The French view that Jonson was the creator of an "English Pleiade"¹⁰⁹ may contain an exaggeration, but there can be no doubt that his basic concern was to sponsor imitation of the great literary models of antiquity. It is, however, not clear whether he based his practice on his French precursors. Thus his Pindaric ode, "To the Immortall Memorie and Friendship of That Noble Paire, Sir Lucius Cary, and Sir H. Morison,"¹¹⁰ may have been modeled upon the original Greek. We have no way of telling. The "Turnes" and "Counter-Turnes" conform metrically, in accordance with ancient rule; the "Stands" are in a different measure. There is an invocation of sorts in the first stanza; the heroes are celebrated; and "Johnson" himself, the panegyrist, is introduced in true Pindaric fashion. On the other hand, the ode suggests French influence in several ways: it is a commemorative poem, enshrining personal feeling much as do certain odes of Ronsard and Joachim du Bellay;¹¹¹ the spirit of the poem is Roman rather than Greek; and the couplet rhymes help to accentuate the swift movement of the verse. At any rate, though one may

¹⁰⁷ "To Antonio Ferrabosco," in *Epigrammes*, CXXXI. See Chalmers, V, 513. See also *Ben Jonson and Elizabethan Music*, by Willa M. Evans (Lancaster, Pa., 1929).

¹⁰⁸ See Saintsbury, *op. cit.*, II, 153.

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, "*La Pléiade shakespearienne*," by Georges Eekhoud, in *La Société nouvelle*, July, 1911, 17, 2, 1.

¹¹⁰ Chalmers, V, 542.

¹¹¹ But compare the First Olympic Ode of Pindar, and see Shafer, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-9.

miss the regal ability to pounce like an eagle in a short phrase, for which Bacon lauded Pindar,¹¹² the ode is interesting and does the various things all Pindarists had attempted with deftness and dispatch. It is, moreover, by the most Roman of all the English poets.¹¹³ This stanza was hammered out on a sturdy anvil:

And shine as you exalted are;
Two names of friendship, but one starre:
Of hearts the union. And those not by chance
Made, or indenture, or leas'd out t'advance
The profits for a time.
No pleasures vaine did chime,
Or rhymes, or ryots, at your feasts,
Orgies of drinke, or fain'd protest:
But simple love of greatness and of good,
That knits brave minds and manners more than blood.

The poem was written about 1628, long after Elizabeth; but its characteristics are those which Jonson had cherished all his life. In his other longer irregular odes, Jonson employed variations of the stanza quoted, though there are no more "Turnes" and "Counter-Turnes." This again conforms with French practice, though of course there are Pindaric odes without epodes and therefore without more than one stanzaic pattern.¹¹⁴ When Jonson had written (in the "Ode to Himself"):

Leave things so prostitute,
And take the Alcoeic lute;
Or thine own Horace, or Anacreon's lyre,
Warm thee by Pindar's fire:
And though thy nerves be shrunk, and blood be cold,
Ere years have made thee old,
Strike that disdainful beat

¹¹² See *The Advancement of Learning*, Book VIII, Chapter I, cited by Blount, *De Re Poetica*, p. 173.

¹¹³ See Ben Jonson *L'homme et l'œuvre*, by M. Castelain (Paris, 1907), *passim*.

¹¹⁴ See Gilbert West's Preface, in Chalmers, XIII, 141-46

Throughout to their defeat:
As curious fools, and envious of thy strain,
May, blushing, swear no palsy's in thy brain,¹¹⁵

he had done several important things. He had created a stanza which, in an endless number of variants that do not destroy its essential formal substance, would remain the stock in trade of the "regular" English ode; ¹¹⁶ he had indicated the sources to which, for better or for worse, our poetry would turn throughout more than a century; ¹¹⁷ and he had domesticated the Pindaric mode.

Some further remarks on the stanza are in order. The absence of feminine rhymes, upon which a melodious age had relied so fulsomely and which for Ronsard were an integral part of the poetic liturgy, was to remain a noteworthy characteristic of serious English odes. Even Tennyson, who in the

¹¹⁵ Chalmers, V, 542

¹¹⁶ See also the reference to Pindar in "An Ode to James Earle of Desmond," Chalmers, V, 470. It may also be added that there was a Renaissance figure of speech known as the "antistrophe"

¹¹⁷ See *A History of English Poetry*, by W. J. Courthope (London, 1903), III, 185. On the subject of Jonson and the Horatian ode, see in general *Ben Jonsons Poetik und seine Beziehungen zu Horaz*, by H. Reinsch (Erlangen, 1909). Few of his versions of Horace seem as good as the *Horace, of the Art of Poetrie*, which may well be even yet the soundest and most agreeable translation in English. Yet some of his renditions of the odes are spirited and worth recalling. He observes, for example, the number of syllables in the varying quatrains of "To Lydia," but he wisely refrains from attempting the choriambic meter, and his final line,

Yet would I wish to love, live, die with thee
is an estimable version of

"Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens."

It is not always an easy matter to distinguish between what Jonson owed to Horace and what had placed him in debt to some other poet. The range of suggestion was as wide as literature, and the demands of music were inexorable. Jonson's nomenclature is, however, fairly accurate. The lyrics in the plays and masques are songs, strictly in the English tradition, except when (like Gascoigne and a few other predecessors or contemporaries) he writes what he terms "choruses" and what would later on be called "choral odes"; and I think one may safely hold that "A Celebration of Charis in Ten Lyrick Pieces" is an ode sequence. Jonson's own labeled odes are often so laden with mythological reference as to outdistance Ronsard. Celia, had she been real, would have required considerable learning to appreciate the praise her poet weaves about her name.

Duke of Wellington ode effectively rhymes "lamentation" with "nation," nevertheless clings resolutely to words which grip the line endings like steel. Second, this is not verse written to accompany Elizabethan music or indeed any music save the artificial orchestral settings of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Third, there is a marked tendency towards epigrammatical utterance.

As Jonson's reputation grew, the Ronsardian ode of Elizabeth's time was supplanted by the classically inspired ode that would become a normal enterprise of English verse. Like all literary phenomena the change doubtless was, however, scarcely perceptible to contemporaries. Jonson's theories met with plenty of opposition during his lifetime; and the Muse was destined to bear a considerable progeny not sired by him. Fundamentally, Jonson was the symbol of a transition which even without him would necessarily have taken place.¹¹⁸ An age which has imitated imitators of the classics must eventually come round to the originals. When this stage had been gone through in turn, humanism would have done its work.

In so far as the Pindaric ode was concerned, the "sons" of Jonson looked reverently upon his "Turnes" and "Stands" but did not imitate them. No doubt the most interesting ode-writing "son" was Thomas Randolph, whose "Ode to Mr. Anthony Stafford to Hasten Him into the Country" shows at once how difficult it was to employ the new Jonsonian stanza and how artfully it could be made to serve the uses of the poet's agreeable moralizing. He writes:

There from the tree
We'll cherries pluck, and pick the strawberry.
And every day
Go see the wholesome country girls make hay,
Whose brown hath lovelier grace
Than any painted face
That I do know

¹¹⁸ See "Ben Jonson's Lyric Poetry," by Ralph S. Walker, in *Criterion* (London, 1935), XIII, 430-48

Hyde Park can show;
Where I had rather gain a kiss than meet
(Though some of them in greater state
Might court my love with plate)
The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street.¹¹⁹

This has directness and some charm. It is pleasant to meet a "wholesome country girl" instead of a nymph or even Diana. Randolph is a personage of some importance in the history of naturalism in poetry. Nevertheless, the line devoted to the "girls" limps badly. "The beauties of the Cheap, and wives of Lombard Street" might well occur in something Pope tossed off in one of his less pungent moods. And how much less melodiously do those words close the stanza than does Jonson's quite perfect "That knits brave minds and manners more than blood," with its magisterial alliteration and blending of vowels.

Therewith Pindar was introduced to England. It is improbable that many poets were familiar with his Odes. Cowley, Congreve, Milton, Pope, and Johnson read him, at least in part; but thereafter, until Landor, there is no evidence of actual familiarity with the Greek originals. It seems that Wordsworth's copy, when offered for sale, proved to have remained unread.¹²⁰ There were, however, a goodly number of translations.¹²¹ Accordingly, the main stream of English Pindaric verse would seem to flow from imitation of English imitations. In addition one may note an interesting memento of

¹¹⁹ *Poemes with the Muses Looking-Glasse, and Amyntas* By Tho Randolph The third Edition Inlarged (London, 1643), p 61, and also (p 64), "An Answer to Mr Ben Jonson's Ode to Persuade Him Not to Leave the Stage"

¹²⁰ Catalogue No. 203 (December, 1934), G H Last, Bromley, Kent "Item 614 Wordsworth's Copy Pindari Carmina, Volumen III with autograph, 'Wm Wordsworth, Rydal Mount' on flyleaf 8vo, boards Gottingae, 1798"

¹²¹ A selection from the English versions of Pindar would include: *Pindariques*, by R Fleming (1691), *Odes of Pindar*, by Gilbert West (1749), *Six Olympic Odes, Being Those Omitted by West*, by H J Pye (1815); *All the Odes of Pindar*, by J S Girdlestone (1810), *The Odes of Pindar*, by D W. Turner and A. Moore (1848), *Pindar in English Rhyme*, by T C. Baring (1875), and *The Odes of Pindar*, by A. F. Murison (1933).

the Theban poet's influence—the *Annalia Dubrensis*, written by Drayton and others in praise of the Cotswold Hills "Olimpick Games."¹²² To this volume Randolph contributed an eclogue¹²³ and Jonson a lyric.

With Drayton one comes finally to indirect Pindaric influences of a novel kind. In the Preface to *Poemes, Lyrick and Pastorall* he held an ode "to have been properly a song moduled to the ancient harp . . . wittenesse those of the Inimitable Pindarus, consecrated to the glory and renown of such as returned in triumph from Olimpus, Elis, Isthmus and the like."¹²⁴ But then he decided, as the ode "to Himself and the Harp" explains, that

Though wee be all to seeke
of Pindar that greate Greeke,¹²⁵

he would follow the example of Horace and refrain from trying to imitate so august a model. Instead, says Drayton,

The *Irish* I admire,
and cleave unto that lyre,
as our musicks mother,
and thinke till I expire
Apollus such an other.

It is in this same ode that Drayton pays a tribute to "Southerne," and beyond Soowthern—by reason of his *aabab* rhyme scheme—to Ronsard. One is left to surmise that "Southerne" must have possessed the ability to talk convincingly about the Pindaric poems. Nevertheless, the "Irish" lyre is Drayton's dominant interest; and its association with the ode seems to indicate that the notion of Pindaric wildness had begun to

¹²² *Annalia Dubrensis. Upon the Yearly Celebration of Mr Robert Dovers Olimpick Games upon Cotswold Hill, Written by Michaell Drayton, Esq.* For a description, see Corser, *Collectanea Anglo-Poetica*, Part I, p. 44. William Basse's contribution to the volume is reprinted in *The Poetical Works of William Basse*, edited by R. Warwick Bond (London, 1893), pp. 105 ff.

¹²³ Randolph, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 4.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* p. 7.

prosper. Perhaps, however, "my friends the Camber-britains and their harp" were the basis of the odd decision to which he came. Elton thinks that the "twangle" of the Irish harp, "its decisive note," is heard in Drayton's verse.¹²⁶ Irish music was, as a matter of fact, popular at the time.¹²⁷ Spenser had attacked the alleged "licentiousness" of the Irish bards, but even during Elizabeth's time their melodies were greatly relished.¹²⁸ Anthony Stafford wrote of Sidney that he deserved a "Quire of ancient Bardi" to sing his praises,¹²⁹ and very probably a good deal of the voguish song and dance music was of Irish origin.¹³⁰ But it may well be that Drayton was thinking all the while of the Welsh.¹³¹

He is sometimes really able to suggest an exotic rhythm that might conceivably be Celtic. He tells us that some "much

¹²⁶ See *Michael Drayton*, by Oliver Elton (London, 1905), p. 100.

¹²⁷ See W. H. M. O'Shaughnessy in *The Irish Statesman*, June 18, 1937.

¹²⁸ See the arraignment of Spenser in *A Literary History of Ireland from Earliest Times to the Present Day*, by Douglas Hyde (London, 1899), pp. 494-95.

¹²⁹ See *Niobe*, by Anthony Stafford (London, 1611), p. 112.

¹³⁰ The ancient Irish bards, it is true, appear to have been a race of Pindars trained to celebrate the prowess of the great. Aodh De Blacam writes, in *Gaelic Literature Surveyed* (New York, 1921), p. 91: "Great houses commonly kept family books in which poems relating to their members were recorded from age to age, and these books, for their social value, were preserved with especial care. The survival of books like these accounts for the predominance of official, and often arid, verse, in what remains to us of the bardic compositions. Poetry of this kind was the main prop of the bardic profession. A poem rehearsing the ancestral dignity of a newly inaugurated prince, or reciting his past achievements at some critical moment in his career, might bring the poet (to quote one famous bard's tariff) twenty kine or a rod hidden in rings of gold."

¹³¹ Shakespeare's *King Henry IV*, Part I, III, 1, blends Welsh "madness" and music in a scene which may have some bearing on Drayton's harp. Mortimer says to his wife,

for thy tongue

Makes Welsh as sweet as ditties highly penn'd

Sung by a fair queen in a summer's bower,

With ravishing divisions, to her lute.

But Hotspur declares,

I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl in Irish.

Welsh nationalism may also have played a part in this development. See *Spenser and the Table Round*, by Charles Bowie Millican (Cambridge, Mass., 1932).

commend the strangeness of my vein," which may or may not mean its metrical originality. Yet this does not alter the fact that the ode stanzas he selects are Ronsardian or keep the meter from being iambic.¹³² Doubtless the "strangeness" lies in the diction—where, as a matter of fact, nearly all the changes of significance in English poetry take root. Dryden, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats added nothing of import to the granary of rhythms or stanzaic forms. Their achievement was to alter poetic language. When Drayton writes,

In kenning of the shore,
Thanks to God first given,
O you, the happiest men,
Be frolic then,
Let cannons roar,
Frighting the wide heaven,¹³³

he has tested the resources of the English tongue, and the Irish harp is of lesser consequence.

From the very beginning, however, imitation of the classics went hand in hand in England with poetic moods that reflect a reading of the Psalms. One can no more think of the ode without at the same time thinking of David than one could talk of English style without a reference to the Bible. Sidney had lauded the Psalmist,¹³⁴ and Harvey had asked what "Festivall Hymnes" were so "divinely daintee" as David's?¹³⁵ Here was, first of all, a powerful ally in the battle against those who held that all poetry and music were ungodly. Sidney said that "Psalm" meant the same thing as "Song," and Byrd coupled the two words in his books, holding that the principal reason why one should learn to sing was that thereby

¹³² See Drayton, *op cit*, p. 4, where he is even a little apologetic about the name he had chosen for his form and submits that if anyone prefers the term "ballade" he was free to use it, since neither Petrarch nor Chaucer had objected to it. He confuses, of course, "ballade" and "ballad."

¹³³ From "To the Virginian Voyage"

¹³⁴ *Op cit*, p. 6.

¹³⁵ *Op cit*, p. 67

one could "honour and serve" God.¹³⁶ Occasionally the character of David as a poet led to the hazarding of some wild guess, as when Lodge summoned Beroaldus to witness that David's "vayne was in imitating (as St. Jerome witnesseth) Horace, Flaccus and Pindarus; sometimes his verse runneth in an Iambus foote, anone he hath recourse to a Saphic vaine."¹³⁷ Many other poets did as much in practice. Thus Greene puts in the mouth of Jonah, "Cast out of the Whales belly upon the Stage," a very good adaptation of the *De profundis*.¹³⁸

Now if David imitated Pindar and Horace, he was an ode writer; and for a considerable number of post-Elizabethans he does really seem to have fitted into the company of the Greeks and Romans. There was great need of Psalms for the new Protestant liturgy; and the chorus of praise which greeted Buchanan's elegant Latin version, in Horatian meters, was a goad to writers of the vernacular.¹³⁹ Catholic poets¹⁴⁰—like Catholic translators of the Scripture—were eager to retain the sacred Muse for their communion. It is impossible and unnecessary to survey here all the published translations of the Psalms up until the time when a boyish Milton would try his hand at paraphrases.¹⁴¹ We shall be content to note that there did appear *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes*, by Richard Verstegen,¹⁴² and that eventually George

¹³⁶ Preface to *Psalmes, Sonets and Songs* (1588)

¹³⁷ *Op cit*, p. 71

¹³⁸ *A Looking Glasse for London and England*, in *The Plays and Poems of Robert Greene*, I, 187.

¹³⁹ Buchanan's translation appeared in 1566. For the text, see *Opera omnia*, edited by T. Ruddiman (Edinburgh, 1715). Blount, *op cit*, "Characters and Censures," p. 34, quotes "Monsieur Teissier" as saying "that the Paraphrase of the Psalms was Buchanan's chief Masterpiece, and that which added much to the credit of this Work, was, that he compos'd it at the very time his Mind was overwhelm'd with Grief, to wit, that he was a Prisoner in a Monastery in Portugal."

¹⁴⁰ See Habington, *op. cit*, pp. 115 ff.

¹⁴¹ See *The Life of John Milton*, by David Masson (London, 1875), I, 64 ff.

¹⁴² *Odes in Imitation of the Seaven Penitential Psalmes, with Sundry Other Poems and Ditties Tending to Devotion and Pietie*, by Richard Verstegen (1601). The odes are mediocre. Verstegen's name was properly Rowlands

Sandys produced, in 1636, the humanistic translation for which so many were yearning.¹⁴³

In praise of this work two poems were written, the first of which reads in part:

Had all the Latin, all the Grecian, quire
 Been still, had Pindar never touched the lyre . . .
 Could not the world a Horace's ode rehearse; . . .
 Give us but our Psalter, and we'll not be poor.
 The Thespian nymphs are silenced after them,
 Outsung by daughters of Jerusalem.

The second poem, "An Ode to My Worthy Kinsman, Mr. George Sandys, upon His Excellent Paraphrase on the Psalms," by Dudley Digges, is more modest and Draytonian:

Take down the Hebrew harps, and reach
 In our speech,
 Whatever we do hate, what fear,
 What love dear.¹⁴⁴

Sandys himself called the paraphrases, which were set to music by Lawes, "songs." The stanza forms he employed are interestingly varied, and are in the humanistic tradition.¹⁴⁵ It would seem that Lawes must have had employment aplenty. I think we may be reasonably certain that Sandys, to whose mill all the antique world was grist, looked upon David as the compeer of Pindar and Callimachus and felt that a "Psalm" was an "ode," with the difference that the first word connoted a sacredness the second did not suggest. This feeling was at all events destined to persist well into the eighteenth century. Here one is far from the "amorous odious sonnet" of Harvey; but if direct imitation of the ancient lyric authors

¹⁴³ *The Poetical Works of George Sandys*, edited by Richard Hooper (London, 1872).

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. xlv and 88.

¹⁴⁵ Psalm XCVIII has a 33332222 stanza pattern, rhyming *ababdddc* (*ibid.*, p. 237). Psalm CVIII has a 444444 pattern, rhyming *abbacc* (*ibid.*, p. 258). By way of contrast, see the ballad meter in *All the Psalmes of David*, by Henry Dod (London, c. 1620).

was to be the major poetic concern, it was inevitable that an especially honored place should be reserved for the Psalmist.¹⁴⁶

Yet, of necessity, the treasure that English poets sought in David was far more important than conformity with antique models would suggest. That conformity had, as a matter of fact, a propagandistic value—the sacred Muse gave standing also to the profane Muse by reason of formal kinship. Deeper than all such concerns went the reverence for spiritual moods, for prayer and self-searching, which the Psalms so illustriously exemplify. And the diction out of which our major poetry is woven is, therefore, seldom without undertones that suggest the language of the Hebrew seer. Pindar, too, was a religious poet, dwelling in awe of the gods and eagerly cherishing moments of insight into the meaning of their ways with man. The epode of the Fifth Olympic Ode is almost a Greek Psalm.¹⁴⁷ Greek spirituality does cast its light over some Eng-

¹⁴⁶ George Wither's "Preface to the Reader" in his *Psalmes of David Translated into Lyrick Verse, According to the Scope of the Original* (London, 1632) is of interest, as note "For, though it be most gracefull in a reading-Poeme, when the Period is cast, sometime into one Parte of the Line or Stanza, and sometime in another Yet, in a Lyrick composition, where the same Staff is often reiterated to one Tune, the Period, and words of the same Quantity must be alwaies observed in the same Places For, if there be not alwaies a decent pause, in the Matter, when the Tune is ended, or, if in the singing, the naturall quantity of the word be adulterated, or if wee be not careful, that a full-point fall not, where the Tune is in the height of a continuing straine It will sound very absurdly to a iudicious eare, as may appear, by offring to sing some of those Composures, which are plausible in the Reading" Thus was an ancient discovery rediscovered Isaac Watts in his Preface to *Horae Lyricae* (1709) wrote "Sustained by their example, a man will not be easily overwhelmed especially when there is a shadow of the practice in the divine Psalmist, while he ascribed to Asaph or Jeduthun his songs, that were made for the harp, or (which is all one) his Lyric odes, though they be addressed to God himself" Chalmers, XIII, 19

¹⁴⁷ It reads, in West's translation (Chalmers, XIII, 156)

O Jove! protector of mankind!

O cloud-enthroned king of gods!

Who, on the Chronian mount reclin'd,

With honour crown'st the wide-stream'd floods
Of Alpheus, and the solemn gloom

Of Ida's cave! to thee I come

lish verse, but the glow by which the whole is illumined is that of the Testament.

The ode as it was thus introduced had a bearing on two matters of such importance that a brief discussion of them must be included in this survey. First, what would be the relationship between music and verse based on classical models? The vitality of Elizabethan music was to a marked extent the result of the fact that music was a popular art which could, indeed, be refined and sublimated, but which was not thereby put in peril of artistic anemia. Madrigal and song writing persisted throughout the Jacobean period; and one may even say that John Dowland and Orlando Gibbons¹⁴⁸ gave the art a new exquisiteness and perfection. Even so, signs that a great vein was running thin were not missing; and in general the growing disparity between a more exacting, intellectualized prosody and a more autonomous, involute music was being noted on all sides.

Thomas Campion¹⁴⁹ may illustrate both the prevailing consciousness of the problem and the drift of the discussion about it. He was a poet as well as a musician, and his was a brimming measure of critical ability.¹ Dissatisfied with the song writing of his time, he sought to give it greater distinction and appositeness. It has often been noted that though his "airs" fuse the metrical materials of folk song and ballad, they

Thy suppliant, to soft Lydian reeds,
Sweet breathing forth my tuneful prayer,
That, grac'd with noble, valiant deeds,
This state may prove thy guardian care,
And thou, on whose victorious brow
Olympia bound the sacred bough,
Thou whom Neptunian steeds delight,
With age, content, and quiet crown'd,
Calm may'st thou sink to endless night,
Thy children, Psaumis, weeping round.

¹⁴⁸ Orlando Gibbons, author of *Madrigals of Five Parts for Voices and Viols* (London, 1612), was one of the last madrigal composers

¹⁴⁹ *The Works of Dr Thomas Campion*, edited by A. H. Bullen (London, 1889).

breathe a studious refinement associable only with a conscious aristocratic humanism. Thomas MacDonagh, one of the first and very best among modern students of Campion, shows that his verse was similarly recondite. "In the very first poem that we know for certain to be his," MacDonagh writes, "Campion is already a curious metrist."¹⁵⁰ He sought out intricate rhythms, and above all he imitated the classical meters. This last practice has been soundly trounced by Saintsbury and others. Saintsbury (having virtually no interest in the relations between music and verse) seems to have missed the reason why Campion essayed the Sapphic and Asclepiad lines.¹⁵¹ He wanted exact conformity between the "ditty" and the "air"; and so he not only frowned upon polyphony and became a pioneer in monodic singing, but said as a prosodist, "The lyric poets among the Greeks and the Latins were first inventors of airs, tying themselves strictly to the number and value of their syllables."¹⁵²

The explanation this requires is difficult to give, because it must depend upon ability to live oneself back into the musical circumstances of the late sixteenth century more successfully than the present writer is able to. Yet I think one may first glance at Piero della Francesca's *Nativity*,¹⁵³ which depicts a group of five singing angels no doubt like the five-part choirs of the century, and then listen to a rendition of any song of the time. It seems obvious that such singing must obscure the meaning, though it by no means wholly destroys it, as modern operatic music normally does; and, accordingly, the Catholic Church relegated polyphony to a secondary role in Divine Service and banned Gounod altogether. What Campion wanted was balance—the balance which monody alone can

¹⁵⁰ *Thomas Campion and the Art of English Poetry* (Dublin, 1913), p. 9. MacDonagh was himself a poet of promise

¹⁵¹ Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 138-40

¹⁵² "Essay on Campion's Music," by Janet Dodge, in Bullen, *op cit.*, pp. xxi ff

¹⁵³ British Museum.

give. But he also wanted elaboration, and so had necessarily to favor complex and varied rhythms. One cannot tell whether he had any real knowledge of Greek music,¹⁵⁴ but he seems to have come by intuition to a grasp of certain essential principles of that old art. For the difficult modes, time measures, and quarter tones of the Greeks were undoubtedly born of the need for giving variety to homophonous music.

In his *Observations on the Art of English Poesie*,¹⁵⁵ Campion examined the various meters from his point of view and arrived in the eighth chapter at "such verses as are fit for ditties or odes," that is, which are "apt to be sung to an instrument." He means, of course, that if homophonic singing is to be successful, the verse forms must be correct; he then proceeds to give three examples—an English Sapphic stanza, a "dimetre" (which is an unrhymed trochaic stanza, the word "dimetre" being used in the classic sense and the verse itself being a modification of the Sapphic), and a curious version of the "dimetre." These three do not exhaust the list of what he would have termed appropriate ode measures. Now it is interesting to note that these several measures begin with long syllables and vary the ends of the unrhymed lines with catalectic and acatalectic syllables. This is in essence so like the Ronsardian practice that one is not surprised when Campion goes on to follow the example of Jacques de la Taille¹⁵⁶ and attempts to introduce quantitative scansion into English.¹⁵⁷

The quantitative prosodists go on down the ages like the seekers after the fourth dimension. Therefore it has been

¹⁵⁴ More will be said about Greek music *infra*. Here the writer, a callow amateur in such matters, expresses gratitude to Professor Christos Vriionides and to these authors: Joannes Sakellarides, *Oi χοροί* (Athens, 1906) and Hugo Riemann, *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1904), Vol. I.

¹⁵⁵ Bullen, *op cit*, pp 225 ff.

¹⁵⁶ See *Manière de faire les vers en français comme en grec et en latin* (Paris, 1573).

¹⁵⁷ It is worthy of note that Campion's first poems appeared in *Poems and Sonets of Sundry Other Noblemen and Gentlemen*, published with an edition of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* in 1591.

only too simple a matter to suppose that Daniel, who replied to Campion in the *Apology for Rhyme*,¹⁵⁸ was correct in every regard. But perhaps—one says this with a measure of trepidation—Daniel was wrong about some things. It is not certain that rhyme, however genuine its charms, is of advantage in homophonic singing; and it is from this point of view that Campion was examining it. The “Dies Irae” is a great poem but a poor song; and the “Domine Jesu Christe,” of the *Missa defunctorum*, is assuredly one of the finest homophonic hymns in any language, though it is not a poem at all. Daniel’s remarks on Campion’s meters¹⁵⁹ are no less open to objection. “You see what we have,” he says, “only what was our own before, and the same but apparrall’d in foreign Titles.” Now if Campion’s measures were practiced by English poets before him, the examples have been lost. What Daniel, in his strict prosodical way, noticed was that here were Sapphic and trochaic stanzas; but he did not observe how different they were from other Sapphic and trochaic stanzas. To him Campion’s primrose was just a primrose.

Nevertheless, the problem of the ideal conformity between English verse and music was not solved by Campion. Perhaps it could not be solved. The trouble lay in the same part of the compass from which all humanistic difficulties sprang. In Greek practice music and verse were unified as a result of a special set of cultural circumstances impossible to reproduce. A poet can write songs for the English ear—and excellent ones, too—but he cannot change that ear—or the modern ear. Doubtless more people read Ronsard today than ever previously read him; but there are only a few scholars who

¹⁵⁸ Daniel, *op. cit.*, I, 5–33.

¹⁵⁹ Campion had written

Faith's pure shield, the Christian Diana,
England's glory, crowned with all divineness,
Live long with triumphs to bless thy people
At thy sight triumphing

It seems from what Daniel says (p. 25) that he scanned these lines as ordinary iambs, which was to ignore completely the value of the caesuræ.

trouble to look up the music written for the odes. And the lute? It is only a symbol of a great and ardent *pietas*, far less real even than the Fourth of July oration or the crown jewels. The ode as it was sung in Renaissance days was not more substantial than the curtsy borrowed by a girl from grandmother's etiquette book for a costume ball. Yet it had a grace of its own, nonetheless; and one thinks it never looked more attractive than in the shadow of the last English Ronsardian—Thomas Campion.

The second and final point to be made concerns the development of encomiastic verse. This was fostered primarily by the universities. The training of youth had not greatly changed in England by the end of the first four decades of the seventeenth century. Schoolboys still spent most of their hours translating from Latin and Greek and back again into those languages.¹⁶⁰ "The Latine and the matter both" of Horace's epistles and sermons were adjudged "more useful then in the Odes" by directors of university study.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, the campus had slowly begun to alter its conception of lyric verse. Perhaps the example of the Jesuit schools on the Continent was in a measure responsible, for there play writing and ode writing were normal interests of academic life.¹⁶² In addition the formal verse which had traditionally graced important occasions took on a more elaborate and studied form.

Poetic bouquets in honor of visiting sovereigns, solemn

¹⁶⁰ See *Thomas Randolph*, by G. C. Moore Smith (Warton Lecture, London, 1927), pp 5 ff

¹⁶¹ See "Directions for a Student in the Universitie," by Dr Richard Holdsworth, elected Master of Emmanuel in 1627, quoted by Samuel Eliot Morison, in *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge, Mass, 1935), pp 62 ff

¹⁶² The influence of the Jesuit schools upon the general academic attitude towards lyric poetry and drama is a subject still awaiting thorough investigation. *Das Jesuitendrama in den Laendern Deutscher Zunge vom Anfang (1555) bis zum Hoch-Barock*, by Johannes Mueller (Augsburg, 1930), is a first essay. Dissertations on other aspects of the subject are in preparation at Cambridge and Yale. But though collections of school odes exist in manuscript, they have not yet been studied with any care. I have no doubt that research would throw some light on the question under discussion here.

stanzas written to grace equally solemn academic festivals, verses penned by university men for some more frolicsome purpose—these constitute a literature of considerable dimensions, only a few titles in which can be mentioned here. The sixteenth century had sung the praises of several university poets. Robert Buchanan was a facile writer of official odes, as witness his poem in honor of the arrival of the Emperor Charles V to Bordeaux.¹⁶³ Patrick Adamson, who resembles Buchanan in being chiefly a translator of religious verse, also composed at least one ode.¹⁶⁴ The "birthday ode," which Jonson as poet laureate was to introduce to English literature, goes back in a somewhat different use to 1574.¹⁶⁵

By the middle of the seventeenth century, however, the ode was a familiar university item.¹⁶⁶ In 1623 Oxford tried its lyric skill congratulating the then Prince of Wales upon his arrival in Spain; ¹⁶⁷ and two years later a "nuptial ode" figured among the pieces written to honor the marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria.¹⁶⁸ In 1636 the university applauded the arrival of a baby daughter to the royal couple in a medley of

¹⁶³ See *Cambridge History of English Literature*, III, 160 The date was 1560

¹⁶⁴ "Ode dicolos distrophos, priore versu Glyconio, posteriore Asclepiadeo, ut illa Horati" in *Reverendissimi in Christo patris Patricii Adamsoni poemata sacra* (London, 1574) The Prologue to this volume also mentions Pindar, Alcaeus, and Sappho

¹⁶⁵ *Ode natalitia, vel opus ejus feriae quae S Stephano protomartyris nomine celebrata* (1574)

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, *Gabrielis Harueij gratulationum Valdinensium libri quatuor Ad Elizabetham reginam* (London, 1578), and *Glasguensis pedagogicae, liber primus Ad serenissimum & invictissimum principem, Jacobum primum Britannicarum omnium insularum regem Eiusdem Galliarum Delphini genethliacon, ad Seaeuolam Sammarthanum questorum Franciae* (Paris, 1653)

¹⁶⁷ *Votiwa . . de auspicato illustrissimi Caroli, Walliae principis, &c in regiam Hispanicam adventu, pia & humilis Oxoniensium gratulatio* (London, 1623) This contains Latin odes

¹⁶⁸ *Epithalamia Oxoniensa In auspaticissimum, potentissimum monarchae Caroli, Magnae Britanniae, Franciae et Hiberniae regis, &c cum Henrietta Maria, aeternae memoriae Henrici magni Gallorum regis filia, connubium* (Oxoniae, 1625). This also contains an *Anacreonticum* in Greek, by Thomas Triplet.

verses in diverse tongues; ¹⁶⁹ and among them was a Greek Pindaric by John Poingdexter. The Encaenia appear to have gone through a similar development. Anthony Wood, describing the exercises of 1675, calls attention to the circumstance that a certain "Ode to Apollo," sung to music "both instrumentall and vocall," was not the author's own even though (or because) it was "well." ¹⁷⁰ Later on there would be no dearth either of English odes or of music, the poets often being illustrious dons and the composers professors. ¹⁷¹ In their less studious moments, students and faculty wielded the lyre in less august ways. To a certain extent this levity was encouraged. Dr. Richard Newton ruled that if a gifted undergraduate preferred verse-making to theme writing he might "be indulged this Liberty, if the Principal shall think fit, and it should not be found to draw off his Mind from serious Studies." ¹⁷² Yet a good many of the more or less private collections which thus came into being suggest Poggio and Rabe-

¹⁶⁹ *Flos Britannicus veris novissimi filiola Carolo & Marjæ nata XVII martii Anno MDCXXXVI* (Oxoniae) Poingdexter wrote in Latin

Pindaricum nemo, vel sic, tentavimus æquor

impare pulsata est Lesbica chorda manu

qua cessit præstant modulis, ego Cæsare vinco

Richard West, Bachelor of Arts, graced the volume with the following extraordinary remarks in English

O may the Queene to deck your Glorious Spheare

Teeme with such Constellations every yeare

And in each sexe transcribe your Godly frame

Until the Preist be puzzled for a Name

That so your lively Image may be seene

Lesse numerous in your Coines, then from your Queene

¹⁷⁰ *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford, 1632-1695*, edited by Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1891), II, 318-19 The passage reads in part "Illus juvenis dominus Thomas Kilmuriae vicecomes, ex Aede Christi, cujus lemma Invectiva in variolas, carmine elegiaco, cum oda ad Apollinem (well, but not his own; in the middle of the Theater) (The Musick, both instrumental and vocall The vocall was set by Mr (Henry) Aldridg of Ch Ch to the latter part of the Lord Kilmurrey's verses)"

¹⁷¹ See, for example, *Comita in honorem Annae pacificae, Oxoniae habita* (Oxford, n d) Joseph Trapp contributed Latin and English odes

¹⁷² Oxford Historical Society, *Collectanea*, Third Series, Vol XXXII, edited by Montagu Burrows (Oxford, 1896), p 314 Dr Newton was Master of Hertford

lais a great deal more than they do Horace and Pindar.¹⁷³ In general, of course, this verse was Pindaric only when it burlesqued the form.

For various reasons the Royal Progresses resisted the tide of classical influence longer than did the university ceremonies. Doubtless the persistence of the masque tradition was the most important single factor. Elizabeth was, to be sure, often greeted with verses in the classical tongues.¹⁷⁴ But usually there was a "dittie" and "Musicke"; and these the sovereigns who followed her also received, though innovations that might have astounded the Virgin Queen were introduced. Thus the entertainment given by the King in honor of the Earl of Nottingham's mission to Spain was a Spanish revel and pageant,¹⁷⁵ during the bullfight enlivening which ten men were killed or wounded. And when that extraordinary object known as "Mr. Bushells Rock" was presented to Queen Henrietta,¹⁷⁶ Dymon Ives set to music some "sonnets" of varying dimensions. By the time of William and Mary, however, the sovereigns were listening to stately odes.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷³ *Naps upon Parnassus A Sleepy Muse Nipt and Pincht, Though Not Awakened Such Voluntary and Jovial Copies of Verses, as Were Lately Receiv'd from Some of the Wits of the Universities in a Frolick, Dedicated to Gondibert's Mistress by Captain Jones and Others* (London, 1658) The following brief essay in literary criticism may be cited (folio A3)

And then Flaccus Horace,
He was but a sower-ass,
And good for nothing but Lyricks
There's but one to be found
In all English ground

Writes as well; who is hight Robert Herrick

¹⁷⁴ For example, *The Royall Passage of her Maestie from the Tower of London, to Her Palace of White-Hall* (London, 1604)

¹⁷⁵ *The Royall Entertainment of the Right Honorable the Earle of Nottingham, Sent Ambassador from His Maestie to the King of Spaine* (London, 1605)

¹⁷⁶ *The Severall Speeches and Songs, at the Presentment of Mr Bushells Rock to the Queens Most Excellent Majesty, August 23, 1636 Her Highness Being Graciously Pleased to Honour the Said Rock, Not Only with Her Royall Presence, But Commended the Same to Be Called after Her Owne Princely Name Henrietta* (Oxford, 1636).

¹⁷⁷ *Vide infra*, Chapter VI.

Something must be said in addition concerning the neo-Latin poets, whose influence upon the trend to classicism in England was large but is not easy to define. The requisite pains having been taken, it is simple enough to catch the echo of a phrase or of an invocation. But to decide whether some ode written after Jonson's time owes more to a humanistic than to a classical original is a nice question to which a book might be devoted. It may safely be affirmed that neo-Latin influence on English lyric verse generally and upon encomiastic verse in particular was in no wise comparable to that of John Owen on the epigram writers.¹⁷⁸ Broadly speaking, the most widely read humanist poets appear to have been Robert Buchanan,¹⁷⁹ Joannes Secundus,¹⁸⁰ and the Jesuit Casimir.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸ *Epigrammata* (London, 1606) and *Liber singularis* (1607)

¹⁷⁹ No man was ever given more fulsome praise by his peers (see Blount, *op. cit.*, "Characters and Censures," pp 32-36), and the fact that Rome placed him among the dangerous heretics of the age added not a little to his fame elsewhere. Yet it is not easy to discover traces of his influence on English lyric writers, and though his works continued to be read throughout the eighteenth century—see *The Autobiography, Times, Opinions and Contemporaries of Sir Egerton Brydges* (London, 1834), I, 114—and met with the approval of Dr Johnson, it must have been difficult to derive more than edification from them.

¹⁸⁰ Jan Everaerts (1511-1536). See *Joannis secundi Hagiensis Basia* (Lugduni, 1539), and *Joannis Nicolai secundi Hagani opera omnia edita cura P. Bosscha* (Lugduni, 1821). For English translations and comment, see *The Love Poems of Joannes Secundus*, by F. A. Wright (New York, 1930). His followers read the *Basia* primarily, and in England it was especially popular with the Caroline poets. Its shadow is upon Herrick, Carew, Sedley, and Stanley. But the influence of Joannes's odes is very much more difficult to discern, Charles Cotton being (so far as I have been able to determine) the only major poet who refers to them. It is hard to believe that an author adjudged to have vanquished Pindar was admired for his shorter lyrics alone. Perhaps—this suggestion is put forward with some trepidation—we owe to him a once prevalent quatrain ode in which the beloved is addressed with mingled affection and levity. Examples are to be found in the poems of William Hammond in *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, edited by George Saintsbury, (Oxford, 1906), II, 496 ff.

¹⁸¹ *The Odes of Casimir*, translated by G. H. (London, 1646). Casimir Sarvievius (Maciej Kazimierz Sarwiewski, 1595-1640) was a Polish humanist who belonged to the Society of Jesus. He is said to have known the odes of Horace by heart. The only edition I have consulted is that of 1791—*Matthiae Casimiri Sarvievi e societate Jesu, carmina*. Little has been written concerning him in recent decades. See "Sarbievski, Poet and Priest," by

To recapitulate: the ode entered English literature as one of several "refined" forms sponsored by those who wished to transform the "vulgarity" of balladmongering into a genteel, cultured, and morally defensible poetic art. Its progenitor was Ronsard, and the Elizabethan ode generally was modeled loosely after French Pléiade patterns. Most of the poets assumed that the form called for a musical setting. But when the trend to classicism, of which Jonson was the great protagonist, became pronounced enough to permit the domestication of the Pindaric in England, the general character of the relationships between poetry and music was changing. Pindaric verse was sundered from music until relatively late in the seventeenth century, and then underwent alterations which greatly modified its structure. Meanwhile ode writing had become increasingly popular as a vehicle for encomiastic sentiment.

Austin O'Malley, in *The Ecclesiastical Review* (Philadelphia, 1916), LV, 145-54 Casimir, whose verse interested Vaughan, was popular in religious circles in the eighteenth century Watts made versions of several odes, and the young Coleridge declared that with few exceptions he knew "no Latin poet, ancient or modern, who has equalled Casimir in boldness of conception, opulence of fancy, or beauty of versification" It is obvious that Casimir's appeal lay in the moral tone and lofty aspiration of his odes They escaped from "all the little emptiness of love" to a domain of not too rapt religious reflection where many English poets found it pleasant to sojourn

CHAPTER THREE: *Milton and the Metaphysical Poets*

POEMS, by John Milton, appeared in 1645.¹ It was one of several collections of lyric verse that were to make the last six years of the decade an unusually fruitful period in the history of English letters. Milton offered no such array of intellectual, amorous, and prosodic riddles as Donne had so lavishly supplied, but his book still evokes inexhaustible comment. Like nearly every other first volume by a very great poet, it is both a reflection of original thought and a summary of influences that then affected the development of young writers.

In so far as these last are concerned, it may be said first of all that the seventeenth was, if not the greatest, certainly one of the richest and most diverse of centuries. Nevertheless the especial note of the earlier decades seems to have been general dissatisfaction with what was being written. It was not merely that some felt, as did Henry Reynolds, that "modern poets" were fawning and barren compared with the ancients.² Latin was still considered by many besides Francis Bacon the sole enduring language.³ Not a few denounced the verse of the time on moral grounds, the author of the Preface to Crashaw's first English volume delivering a philippic which surpasses

¹ For the text of the poems discussed, see *The Student's Milton*, edited by Frank Allen Patterson (New York, 1930)

² *Mythomystes, Wherein a Short Survey Is Taken of the Nature and Value of True Poesy, and Depth of the Ancients above our Moderne Poets* (1633) See *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, edited by J E Spingarn (Oxford, 1908), I, 141-50

³ Chapman's *Preface to Homer* and Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, I, 80.

anything of the kind produced in Elizabeth's time.⁴ Nor were there lacking those who insisted that good poetry is the fruit of "Vigilance and Labour" and then held these commodities to be very scarce.⁵ The major practical result of all this self-criticism was a manifest tendency to form poetical cliques; and the normal processes of cross-fertilization were interrupted.

Two interesting general trends were, however, discernible. First, the Greek influence on the pastoral, ode, and shorter lyric became more pronounced. But either because the Hellenic Muse was poorly understood⁶ or because the time was not apt, the results were not as gratifying as might have been expected. Despite (or because of) Milton's "Lycidas" and Cowley's "Pindariques," Dryden was ultimately led to suggest that "it becomes us, for the sake of euphony, rather *Musas colere severiores*, with the Romans, than to give in to the looseness of the Grecians."⁷ Second, this was a philosophical age, with Aristotle, Plato, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, and Martin

⁴ "Preface to the Reader," *Steps to the Temple, with Other Delights of the Muses* (London, 1646) "Oh! When the generall arraignment of Poets shall be, to give an accompt of their higher soules, with what a triumphant brow, shall our Divine Poet sit above, and looke downe upon poore Homer, Virgil, Horace, Claudian?" Compare, from a less exalted writer, Thomas Beedome's statement in *Select Poems Divine and Human* (London, 1928), p. 28

An amorous verse (faire Ladies) winnes your Loves

Sooner than buskpoints, farthingalls, or gloves.

A Poets quill doth stand in greater stead,

Than all such toys to gaine a maiden head.

⁵ See *Preface to Gondibert*, by Sir William Davenant (1650) See also Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, II, 24-25.

⁶ One of the earliest treatises on Pindar was *Comparison de Pindare et d'Horace*, by François Blondel (Amsterdam, 1693) This was translated, without acknowledgments to Blondel, by Ralph Schomberg as *A Critical Dissertation on the Character and Writings of Pindar and Horace, in a Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of B—* (London, 1749) In all probability the French original was known to some students in England before Schomberg's version put in an appearance Treatises on Greek music—without some attention to which the poetry can hardly be understood—did not appear until well into the eighteenth century One of the first good essays was *Entretiens sur l'état de la musique grecque*, by the Abbé Jean Jacques Barthelemy (Amsterdam, 1777).

⁷ *Examen Poeticum*, text in *Restoration Literature*, edited by Cecil A. Moore (New York, 1934), p. 91.

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Bucer behind the poet's elbow. Ratiocination was in the air; and Courthope has pointed out that "with the habit of reasoning paradoxically was intimately associated the habit of writing paradoxically."⁸ The hyperbole may have been the result of the general baroque attitude towards the arts. "The paradox must doubtless be attributed to the prevailing atmosphere of combat. In Elizabeth's time, writers had often exchanged insults; under James, Charles, and Cromwell they fired doctrine and religion, and normally the missile was dispatched on a parabolic curve.

But though the shadows of those storm clouds do lie over the volume of 1645, the questions chiefly to be raised concern Milton's choice of poetic form and the literary influences to which he was subjected. The extraordinary range of his early reading left Milton in fief to no one poet or literature. Students have noted his borrowings from the treasury of antique song and phrase; his indebtedness to Spenser and the more significant disciples of that poet, notably the Fletchers; his early admiration for Josuah Sylvester; and his affinity with the Italians.⁹ In so far as the Miltonic ode is concerned, however, it must be borne in mind that the poet continued to experiment with the form, some of his most interesting achievements being of a later date. One is led to surmise that for his early models he did not go far afield—that he wrote consciously in the Elizabethan tradition and like his forebears studied the great Italians.

The brief "On Time" is, however, a curious and interesting experiment for which no exact parallel can be found in Milton's English precursors.¹⁰ Formally, it is strikingly like the irregular ode which Coventry Patmore introduced to nineteenth-century readers;¹¹ and there are even lines which, taken

⁸ Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, III, 107.

⁹ A good summary is afforded by *A Milton Handbook*, by James Holly Hanford (New York, 1933), p. 129.

¹⁰ See, however, Donne's "Dissolution," Chalmers, V, 140.

¹¹ See "The Cry at Midnight," in *The Unknown Eros*, by Coventry Patmore (London, 1878), p. 145.

out of their context, could well be attributed to the later poet.¹² Milton may have been following Dante's precept that lyric stanzas might be varied by the introduction of irregular lines,¹³ or he may have had before him the pattern of an Italian ode. One is inclined to think, however, that the poem was fashioned after some piece of academic verse based directly on Greek practice.¹⁴ "At a Solemn Musick"¹⁵ and "Upon the Circumcision"¹⁶ are relatively simpler, though in the second poem irregularity is also dominant. The first is almost a variant of one of the less regular stanzas in "Lycidas."

Therewith we come to "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity,"¹⁷ which the poet himself considered his first important work. It indicates the direction in which his mind was moving; it enables the student to surmise what he was reading—Tasso and Giles Fletcher in particular—and foreshadows the elaborate sacred pageant of *Paradise Lost*, but from the present point of view it is primarily a step forward, a long step forward, in the history of the English ode. Admittedly, for political and personal reasons, this lyric did not for a long time receive its meed of attention; yet even so it established the religious ode as a permanent art form, wedding David and classical antiquity in an exemplary manner.¹⁸ Milton termed

¹² For example,

Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss
With an individual kiss

¹³ In *De vulgari eloquentia*. See *Le Opere di Dante*, edited for the Società Dantesca Italiana (Florence, 1926), pp. 319 ff., and *A History of English Criticism*, by George Saintsbury (New York, n.d.), p. 21.

¹⁴ Eustace M. W. Tillyard, in *Milton* (New York, 1930), pp. 62–63, divides the poem into "two paragraphs," lines 1–8 and 9–22. If this partition is not factitious, it would indicate a relationship with the technique of the sonnet.

¹⁵ This may be an experiment in classical metrics. At any rate one might scan a typical line as follows

Wed your di-vine | sounds, || and mixt | power em-ploy

¹⁶ The poem abounds in conceits, almost suggesting Crashaw.

¹⁷ Composed in 1629. Hanford, *op. cit.*, p. 128, states "We learn from the close of *Elegy VI* that it was begun before daylight on Christmas morning, 'as a birthday gift to Christ'."

¹⁸ See "Notes on Milton's 'Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity,'" by Albert S. Cook, in *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy* (New Haven, 1909), XV, 307–68.

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it, to be sure, both a "humble ode" and a "hymn," but subsequent insistence upon the first term is unequivocally correct. The religious odes of Jonson were termed "hymns"; and it seems probable that the first notable departure from that verbal usage was made by Sir John Beaumont, whose 1629 volume contained the "Ode on the Blessed Trinitie," to which reference will be made later on.

The prelude of four stanzas has an epic, meditative character. Milton is making an offering of his poem. Formally he copies here the stanza of Spenser's *Hymnes*, except that the final line is an Alexandrine. This is not unusual: the Fletchers, Edward Fairfax, and others had modified the Spenserian epic and pastoral stanzas, which when freed of their burden of archaic honey had to run more swiftly. One may, however, observe that a marked predilection for the six-foot line is a notable characteristic of English Renaissance verse. This is probably not attributable entirely to Spenser, since it is likely enough that the ideal of the classical hexameter was in the back of many minds.¹⁹ The form of the "hymn" proper is, however, in no sense Spenserian but resembles Jonsonian ode stanzas so closely (for all the added subtlety of thought and structure) that a common or cognate source is evident. Jonson also used the final Alexandrine.²⁰ Above all the resemblance lies in the shifting line length and the swift movement achieved by the introduction of trimeter lines.²¹ The hard ring of masculine rhymes is heard throughout, too, though Milton also makes striking use of feminine rhymes upon occasion. All this is so definitely associated with the ode tradition that no other word for the form could suggest itself, regardless of whether we assume that Jonson influenced Milton's choice of the stanza or whether we hold that both drew independently from classical or neoclassical sources.

Yet it is particularly worthy of note that Beaumont's ode

¹⁹ There was also the example of the French Alexandrine.

²⁰ In "An Ode to Himself," Chalmers, V, 470.

²¹ See the Sir Lucius Cary ode.

seems to enshrine the prosodic germ of Milton's poem.²² One stanza will illustrate and at the same time represent a variety of criticism which during coming decades would be leveled more and more imperiously against lyric verse:

Stay, stay, Parnassian girl,
Here thy descriptions faint,
Thou human shapes canst paint,
And canst compare to pearle
White teeth, and speak of lips which rubies taint
Resembling beauteous eies to orbs that swiftly whirle.

Milton's poem is very much better than this. But the combination of three, five, and six stress lines is there, and (what is doubtless more significant) the ode has been used to celebrate a lofty religious theme. It would be helpful to know how Sir John—of whom very little is related other than that he was a friend of Jonson and Drayton—came by that form and impulse. An advocate of Roman poetic discipline without the frills and corsets that would later on choke many an Augustan,²³ he was also the author of poems on several ecclesiastical feasts; and one of these, "Of the Epiphany," contains the same essential themes round which Milton's ode was built.²⁴ Note, for instance, these lines:

The cribbe becomes an altar; therefore dies
No oxe nor sheepe, for in their fodder lies
The Prince of Peace, who, thankfull for his bed,
Destroyes those rites, in which their blood was shed.

²² See Chalmers, VI, 23. This is a lyric of twelve stanzas, opening with an invocation to the Muse.

²³ Beaumont's quality as a translator of Horace may be illustrated with these lines from his version of the Second Epode

No bird, from Affrike sent, my taste allowes,
Nor fowle which Asia breeds
The olive (gather'd from the fatty boughes)
With more delight me feeds

²⁴ See Chalmers, VI, 23. There are other similarities between Beaumont and Milton. For example, both surmise that the "cold Climate" of England may interfere with the production of poetry. See *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, p. 1000, footnote

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The gamut of Renaissance art feeling is covered in Milton's beautiful poem. It is first of all a fresco designed with masterly architectonic skill, incorporating numerous motifs—pastoral, mythological, allegorical—which the great painters had employed to give substance to their treatment of religious themes. Venetian and Florentine canvasses are called to mind by a stanza like this:

Yea Truth, and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a Rain-bow; and like glories wearing
Mercy will sit between,
Thron'd in Celestiall sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering,
And Heav'n as at som festivall,
Will open wide the Gates of her high Palace Hall ²⁵

Nevertheless the idealism and the religious reverence are of England, associating tenderness with fervor, and beauty with noble reflection.

More questions are raised by "Lycidas," ²⁶ which Milton called a "Monody," doubtless because he thought that was the proper name for it. When therefore Paul Elmer More, like many another, labeled the poem an "elegy," ²⁷ he was overlooking a point of some importance to the student of verse morphology. Milton, whose reading of the classics and their humanist followers may have led him to distinguish more carefully between verse forms than did the majority of poets in his time, avoided the use of the word "elegy" primarily because his poem was not written in elegiac verse. ²⁸

²⁵ Tillyard, *op cit*, pp 35-65, associates this stanza with Tasso's *Canzone sopra la capella del Presepio*, which Hanford, *op cit*, p 128, also terms the "only parallel of significance" with Milton's poem

²⁶ The date of composition was November, 1637 Milton adds this note: "In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drown'd in his Passage from *Chester* on the *Irish Seas*, 1637 And by occasion foretels the ruine of our corrupted Clergy then in their height"

²⁷ "How to Read Lycidas," *The American Review*, Vol VII, Part II, p 152.

²⁸ If, as has been contended, Milton's critical views are reflected in Edward Phillips' *Theatrum Poetarum* (1675), he was concerned with clear definitions

The "monody" was usually a pastoral ode,²⁹ which could upon occasion shed a "melodious tear." Milton casts himself in the role of singer rather than of seer, but his verse fits neither part, being a student's lament compounded of wide reading, extraordinary sensitiveness to beauty, high idealism, and renouncement.

Prosodically the poem reaches almost every goal toward which the Pindaric ode would later on tend. Nowhere outside of Greece could Milton have found authority for the very great license he permits himself in building and arranging stanzas which are not verse paragraphs (they are too definitely variants of one underlying pattern for that) but which are still too individual to owe their origin to Italian practice, though the influence of that practice is manifest in the rich pastoral coloring and in the rhythmic texture of certain passages.³⁰ Saintsbury has suggested a relationship between the

of poetic form Two criticisms of Cowley's odes are offered one suggests that what "we call the Pindaric" is really more like the monostrophic choral ode of Aeschylus, the other holds that the so-called Pindaric, having "no necessity of being divided into Strophs or stanzas, would be much more suitable for Tragedy than the continued Rhapsodie of Riming Couplets" Phillips says also that "the English Ode heretofore" had been "much after the same manner" as the song or air, the sonnet and the canzon He appends a series of rigid classifications, which the historian might well wish had been adopted See Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, pp 265 ff In his *Treatise of Education* (1644), Milton commends the "sublime art" of prosody because it establishes laws for each *genre* of verse and suggests models for imitation (Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, p 206)

²⁹ The "pastoral ode" was never carefully differentiated from the "pastoral song," though some poets may have used the first term to indicate greater artistry or nearness to Greek sources George Wither writes in *Fair Virtue*

And strange it was to hear

Of any swain that ever lived there,
Who either in a pastoral ode had skill,
Or knew to set his fingers to a quill

There follow such pastoral odes, prefaced by long metrical introductions and written in trochaic tetrameter couplets with predominatingly feminine rhymes. This may prove some relationship with the Elizabethan ode of Ronsardian origin, but it proves nothing conclusively. See *The Poetry of George Wither*, edited by Frank Sidgwick (London, 1902), II, 13 ff

³⁰ Tillyard, *op cit*, pp 80 ff, divides the poem into five sections There are eleven stanzas, irregular in size and form, the final one being in *ottava rima*.

poem and the choruses of Greek tragedy;³¹ and it is equally possible that the irregular measure was based on humanistic models at least indirectly derived from Pindar. Of interest also is the fact that as the poem progresses Milton reverts to five-stress regularity, in this manner calming the disturbed flow of his verse.

That Milton knew his Pindar is shown, of course, by his Latin Pindaric of 1646, *Ad Joannem Rousum Oxoniensis academiae bibliothecarum*,³² which seems the first tangible proof that an English poet of the seventeenth century studied the original Greek odes. It is true that Milton's ode is not correct (there being only one epode); and one may assume, if one likes, that he had not fully grasped the Pindaric principle. The appended note indicates, however, awareness of the defection and makes the requisite apology. General studious interest in Pindar—at least at second hand—had grown since the opening of the century. Giles Fletcher cited him to the reader of *Christ's Victory and Triumph*;³³ Donne introduced into *Biathanatos* an anecdote concerning him;³⁴ and Henry Reynolds attributed "learning and wisdom" to him.³⁵ There were copies of Pindar in the libraries of Milton³⁶ and Sedley;³⁷ and it is worthy of note that the Sedley copy brought

In general the last three conform to a greater extent with Italian practice than do the rest. Hanford, *op cit*, p. 154, says, however "In general Milton's formal models here are to be found in the metrical practice of contemporary Italian poetry."

³¹ *English Prosody*, II, 218 ff.

³² *Student's Milton*, pp. 149-51. Milton suggests that the ode should, perhaps, be termed monostrophic.

³³ See Chalmers, VI, 58-59. Fletcher writes in part "If they retain musicians, who ever doubted, but that poets infused the very soul into the inarticulate sounds of music? that without Pindar and Horace, the lyrics had been silenced for ever."

³⁴ See the Facsimile Text Society edition (New York, 1930), p. 100.

³⁵ See Spingarn, *Critical Essays*, p. 144.

³⁶ Milton's was a 1620 edition. See Hanford, *op cit*, p. 330.

³⁷ See *Sir Charles Sedley*, by V. De Sola Pinto (New York, 1927), pp. 324-32. Sedley's was also the 1620 edition, but it may have belonged to the "late Eminent Divine" whose books were included in the Sedley sale. The copy brought 6s. 10d.

a good price when sold. In all likelihood, Milton's reading in the Greek poet did not precede the composition of "Lycidas" and the "Nativity" ode.³⁸

In content, however, "Lycidas" is a pastoral elegy³⁹ which serves the purpose of mirroring the poet's attitude towards death. If life can be snuffed out as suddenly and cruelly as Edward King's was, what purpose is served by studious pursuit of the Muse's favor? Yet beyond death lie "the blest Kingdoms meek of joy and love": and therefore the poet, with his gaze fixed on the "blest Kingdoms" rather than on a Church deemed unregenerate, is assured of the validity of his endeavor. There are reasons for supposing that "Lycidas" offers almost the first inkling in English literature of the priest-poet. It is not merely that Milton defends the integrity of the Christian conscience against a prelatical Church.⁴⁰ He is the intellectual aristocrat, the seer of the Renaissance, in whose mind reason and the gift of prophecy are combined. His verse speaks for Erasmus but also for David.

The *décor* of this monody has been ably discussed by various critics,⁴¹ and it is necessary to add only a few details of interest to students of the ode form.⁴² Josuah Sylvester, whose influence on Milton is well established, probably had something to do with the choice of the pattern selected for "Lycidas." In 1594 there appeared "Monodia: an Elegie," which Milton almost certainly would have read.⁴³ There are, I think,

³⁸ Milton's Pindaric was written in 1646

³⁹ See Hanford, *op cit*, p. 152, and Hanford, "The Pastoral Elegy and Milton's 'Lycidas,'" *PMLA*, XXV, 403-47

⁴⁰ See *Tracts on Liberty in the Puritan Revolution*, by William Haller (New York, 1934), I, 17

⁴¹ See "The Conventions of the Pastoral Elegy," by George Norlin, in *The American Journal of Philology*, XXV, 295-312

⁴² Certain resemblances may also be seen to Beaumont's "To the Glorious Memory of Our late Soueraine Lord, King James" (Chalmers, VI, 30). similarity in the rhythmical effect of the opening lines, dominance of masculine rhyme in both, Milton having only two exceptions and Beaumont none, a similar appeal to the universality of morning, and a comparable religious note. These things may, however, be purely coincidental.

⁴³ The poem is written in the regular "Sylvester measure."

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additional traces of Sylvester. His "Funeral Elegie," contributed to *Lachrymae Lachrymarum*,⁴⁴ contained these lines:

With two-hand Sinnes of *Profit* and of *Pleasure*,
And (th' odious Engine, which doth All include)
Our many-pointed proude Ingratitude.

This clearly suggests Milton's "two handed engine." When in addition one notes that Sylvester had introduced into the *Divine Weekes*⁴⁵ a passage, of his own making, to denounce the Gunpowder Plot and warn the ministers of Christ to protect their "Lambs" against Rome, curiosity rises still higher. "Muzzle those Sheep-clad bloody Wolves of Rome," writes Sylvester; and I believe we may say that the meaning of the famous passage is clearly that the "engine" waiting to smite decisively is the Church of Rome, incarnation of profit and of pleasure.

Moreover, Sylvester has a modest importance as an imitator of French ode stanzas, since it would seem that the form he chose for his "Ode of the Love and Beauties of Astrea"⁴⁶ could only have come from across the Channel. The tripping four-foot trochaic catalectic meter dominates eight-line stanzas that break up naturally into quatrains. Like the Fletchers and certain other poets of the age, Sylvester professes to be interested in the "soul" and "wit" of his lady but, nevertheless, runs the gamut of her charms with quite professional skill.⁴⁷ This may indicate the reason why he termed the poem

⁴⁴ London, 1613

⁴⁵ *Du Bartas His Divine Weekes and Workes Translated and Dedicated to the Kings Most Excellent Maestie*, fourth edition (London, n d), pp 509-10 But in the 1630s, when "Lycidas" was written, Queen Henrietta Maria was endeavoring to have George Con raised to the cardinalate and Pope Urban was holding out for some signal concession to Catholics. See *Charles I and the Court of Rome*, by Gordon Albion (London, 1935), Chapter XII It is planned to present the evidence for this explanation elsewhere

⁴⁶ Sylvester, *op cit*, pp 765-72

⁴⁷ See, in Giles Fletcher's *Christ's Triumph over Death* (Chalmers, *op cit*, VI, 71), the ultra-seductive "wooing song" which begins
Love is the blossom where there blows
Everything that lives or grows

an ode. There is evidence to show that Sylvester elsewhere adopted the same meter for love verse.⁴⁸

Milton's later experiments in the ode are of great interest, though most of them are outside the limits assigned to the present treatise. The curious rhyme scheme of his version of the Third Psalm, set against the background of a stanzaic pattern more irregular than any he otherwise employed;⁴⁹ the great choruses of *Samson Agonistes*, somber, mysterious, and suggestive of an Hebraic Aeschylus;⁵⁰ and the translation of

As for Sylvester, the following lines are daring enough, for so psalm-singing a poet:

What? What fruit of life delights
My delicious appetites,
If I over-passe the measure
Of those apples of thy breasts?
What fresh buds of scarlet Rose
Are more fragrant sweet than those
Then those Twins, thy Straw-berrie teates,
Curled-purled Cherielets?

⁴⁸ See his poem, "The Woodman's Bear," described in *Chorus Vatum Anglicanorum*, by Joseph Hunter (New York Public Library, Facsimile Reproduction), Vol I, Part II, fol 237-38

⁴⁹ This appears to be an essay in the monostrophic ode form of Aeschylus and is governed by a subtle speech principle difficult to fathom or expound. Observe the effect of the trochaic and spondaic submeter in the opening lines. And the effect of combining short lines with feminine rhymes in the following is most unusual.

For my sustain
Was the Lord. Of many millions
The populous rout
I fear not though incamping round about
They pitch against me their Pavillions

⁵⁰ Though the choral ode is outside the purview of this treatise, it is impossible to ignore altogether these magnificent choruses. Even today, after a century of prosodic experimentation, which has led to virtually every conceivable form of rhythm or rhythm's absence, these somber choruses are as mysterious and suggestive as ever. Whether Milton was groping his way toward the secret of the Greek ode, so little understood in his time, whether his ear was haunted by strange Hebraic rhythms, or whether in his old age he managed to release the natural melodies of English speech from bondage in noble but inevitably confining Renaissance verse forms, the fact remains that these gnarled, frowning meditations on the problem of evil are without precedent in English letters. For comment on the prosody, see *Milton's Prosody*, by Robert Bridges (Oxford, 1921), pp 46-66, and Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 258 ff.

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the *Pyrrha Ode*,⁵¹ one of four legacies from Horace that must find a place in this discussion: all have influenced the trend of English verse. The translation from Horace might, indeed, be termed the "version of the forty triumphs," because there are at least that many prosodical marvels. The unrhymed lines that lap over like waves of music; the delicate beauty of the half-revealed assonance that takes the place of rhyme; the inverted stresses that afford a faint but perceptible trace of antique choriambic rhythm; the admirable spondees of

and Seas
Rough with black winds and storms,

the stanza itself, Horatian and yet seemingly native English; the apt diction of melancholy—these are some of the treasures of this little poem. It is hardly too much to say that if by chance the rest of Milton's work had been lost, this translation would suffice to prove that he had been a great artist. Nowhere else in such brief compass is the evidence concerning what our literature gained from a study of the classic ode so impressively assembled.

And yet? Never does the value of humanistic art forms seem more open to question than when one studies Milton. He rivals even Shakespeare and Dante in the command of varied phrase:

Crash on their sounding shields the din of war
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic
But when of old the sons of morning sang

The note is as unmistakable as is the ruggedness of Colorado mountain peaks or the sheen of sterling silver. Milton was, however, stretched not on one but on several Procrustean beds—his theology, his encyclopedic knowledge of myth, and his

⁵¹ Milton's note for this ode says that he translated "according to the Latin measure as nearly as the Language will permit" He has achieved almost perfectly the substitution of stresses for the long Latin syllables, though the rhythm is of course not the same. The first foot of each set of trimeter lines has inverted stress.

learned prosody.⁵² Certainly none was always to his advantage; and one thinks that the accumulated treasure of centuries (for he more than any other man of his time knew not England only but the whole of civilization) fashioned the all too glittering train of his intellect. One may revel in it, but there are times when the reader of English odes turns with relief to Jonson's sturdy, unvarnished

for life doth her great actions spell
By what was done and wrought
In season, and so brought
To light: her measures are, how well
Each syllable answered, and how formed, how fayre;
These make the lines of life, and that's her ayre.

The extent to which Milton was isolated from his own age is hard to determine, and no neat lines of demarcation need be drawn here. It is nevertheless true that in so far as the ode is concerned, proof of Miltonic influence on seventeenth-century writers is difficult to find.⁵³ Possibly there are two reasons why this was so. Clearly the poets of that era who might have shared his religious and philosophic moods saw in him not what the post-Dryden period normally beheld—the poet of Puritanism and the spokesman for freedom—but a heretic, a dangerous radical, a pitter of his own mind against authority. And in the second place, the time lacked sympathy with what was Elizabethan, Spenserian, in Milton. The veil was of the same woof as that which obscured the greatness of Shakespeare and Drayton, the second of whom is not so much as mentioned in Blount.⁵⁴ Perhaps the trouble was changing

⁵² Consult, especially, Hanford, *op cit*, Chapter VI

⁵³ Such proof as there is can be found in *The Early Popularity of Milton's Minor Poems*, by George Sherburn (Chicago, 1920).

⁵⁴ For his essay on Milton, see Blount, *De Re Poetica*, "Characters and Censures," pp 135-38. He also cites the "Authors of the Athenian Mercury" on the moot question as to whether Milton or Waller was the greater. It is stated by way of reply that "Milton was the fullest and loftiest, Waller the neatest and most correct poet we ever had." This critique is characteristic of the period.

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tastes in poetic properties.⁵⁵ At any rate, the "Nativity" ode affected popular religious feeling and fugitive verse far more deeply than it did poetry.⁵⁶ The Pyrrha Ode was widely imitated after the turn of the eighteenth century,⁵⁷ and "Lycidas" also became the model for dozens of "monodies."⁵⁸ Yet, in general, one is reduced to searching out faint if unmistakable echoes of Miltonic diction.⁵⁹

The bulk of Caroline verse went other ways, either towards enjoyment or renunciation. Here the first route concerns us almost exclusively for the sake of the Horatian interlude which left an ineradicable imprint on nearly all later ode writing. This interlude was to some extent the result of prevalent general literary conditions. Echoes of Elizabethanisms still mingled with the cadences of Jonsonian classicism in a medley not very significant, perhaps, but none the less often interesting and charming. There is, for example, a fascinating "Ode" by William Browne, who honored Drayton and Spenser.⁶⁰ Verse

⁵⁵ On the general subject of properties, as the word is used here, see "Poetic Diction in English," by Robert Bridges, in *English Critical Essays Twentieth Century*, edited by Phyllis M. Jones (London, 1933), p. 6

⁵⁶ See, for example, "Editor's Easy Chair," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, XXXVI (February, 1868), 397 "And when the eve of the blessed day comes, or upon its evening, when the tired children sleep then break up the coal into a blaze, and open your Milton, and read aloud the hymn to Mrs John And by-the-by when you, Mr John, and the dear woman who was sitting upon the floor gravely taking tea before breakfast, and this old Easy Chair, and all the parents and grandparents who welcomed this Christmas are gone, Master Jack will read the hymn to a still younger Mrs John"

⁵⁷ See *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry*, by Raymond D. Havens (Cambridge, Mass., 1922) He says (p. 560) that "from 1700 to 1837 no fewer than eighty-three poems, and probably many more, were written in Milton's Horatian stanza, which thus has a vogue almost as great as any of his other verse-forms enjoyed," and cites, for example, Paul Rolli's *Works* (1735), with odes in blank verse

⁵⁸ I think there are no seventeenth-century examples, but after 1700 there was a veritable downpour of monodies, at the expense of which the jokesters sharpened their wits Sherburn, *op cit*, quotes an amusing satire entitled "To a Gentleman, Who Desired Proper Materials for a Monody"

⁵⁹ *Studies in the Milton Tradition*, by John Walter Good (Champaign, Ill., 1915), gives instances, see especially p. 87.

⁶⁰ Text in *Poetry of the English Renaissance*, p. 582 Note this couplet
For on my harp's most high and silver string
To those nine sisters whom I love I sing.

collections tended to become more eclectic.⁶¹ The poet, advertised to the world by as glittering an assemblage of "front porch" encomia as he could muster, then displayed his virtuosity. Translation was a great and vogueish boon. If the writer could display his prowess in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, even the universities might be impressed, just as they have been more recently by novelists dazzlingly familiar with science, psychoanalysis, sociology, and other scholarly pursuits too numerous to mention. To many of these scribes, the word "ode" was merely a fashionable term, which they varied with "song," "hymn," and "sonnet" as a modern hostess changes the wine glasses.

But the Horatians saw clearly what they wanted to do and often did it. Their achievement shall interest us here only in so far as it included the "heroic ode," a species of poem destined to play an important part in the development of English encomiastic verse. Sir Henry Wotton's "An Ode to the King, on His Returning from Scotland to the Queen"⁶² is not a very stirring poem. Yet it is crisp, well planned, and expressive of deeply felt moral sentiment.⁶³ The major interest lies, however, in the fact that this is one of the first among an almost

⁶¹ For example, *Nocturnall Lucubrations*, by Robert Chamberlain (London, 1638), and *Poemata*, by Alexander Rosse (London, 1637). It seems unnecessary to discuss the poetry of Sir William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, though *Aurora* is a good instance of the older Miscellany, and though the choruses of his plays, notably *Darius* (Chalmers, *op cit*, V, 428-31) resemble in mood if not in performance those of *Samson Agonistes*. But a word is in order concerning *Brathwayte's Odes* or *Philomel's Tears*, edited by Sir Egerton Brydges (Kent, 1815). Richard Brathwayte, who wrote forty odd volumes, also varies his verse forms "Ode II," which begins,

Jug, jug, fair fall the Nightingale,
Whose tender breast
Chaunts out her merry madrigal,

is reminiscent of Trico's song in Lyly's *Campaspe*.

⁶² *Reliquiae Wottoniae*, by Sir Henry Wotton, Kt (London, 1685), p. 382.

⁶³ See Sir Henry Wotton, *with Some General Reflections on Style in English Poetry*, by H. H. Asquith (The English Association Pamphlet No. 44). Margaret Barnard Pickell, in *Charles I as Patron of Poetry and Drama* (London, 1936), p. 78, defends the sincerity of the moral sentiment Wotton used a five-line tetrameter stanza, employed also in his beautiful "Queen of Bohemia," which is in the pastoral tradition.

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endless succession of poems which link poetically the sovereigns of the Isle with Augustus. Better by far is Sir Richard Fanshawe's "An Ode, upon Occasion of His Majesties Proclamation in the Year 1630."⁶⁴ Here the *Carmen Saeculare* stanza, which Jonson had used in "Eupheme," is employed with an impressive firmness that adds much to the quite surprising charm of the poem:

Let no dark Corner of the Land
Be unembellished with one Gem;
And those which here too thick do stand
Sprinkle on them.

If there had been any doubt that Horatian verse could carry the true English melody, even when the theme is relatively unimportant, Fanshawe's poem was sufficient evidence.⁶⁵

But the jewel among these odes is, of course, the much later and genuinely magnificent "Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" by Andrew Marvell.⁶⁶ Bchcad- ing were almost worth a king's while for the sake of immortality such as this:

He nothing common did, or mean,
Upon that memorable scene,
But with his keener eye
The axe's edge did try,

⁶⁴ The full title adds, "Commanding the Gentry to Reside upon Their Estates in the Country." See *Il Pastor Fido, and Other Poems*, by Sir Richard Fanshawe (London, 1676), text in *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, pp 448-52. Fanshawe has received vastly less than his due. For comment, see *Studies of English Poets*, by J. W. Mackail (London, 1926), pp 38-39, who stresses the similarity between Fanshawe and Milton in education, travel, and reading.

⁶⁵ Fanshawe stresses the link with Augustus

A Tityrus, that shall not cease
Th' Augustus of our World to praise
In equal verse, Author of Peace
And Halcyon days.

⁶⁶ *The Poems of Andrew Marvell*, edited by G. A. Aitken (London, 1892), I, 133.

Nor called the gods with vulgar spite
To vindicate his helpless right;
But bowed his comely head,
Down, as upon a bed.

Here is the stanza in which Horace praised Augustus, and the Roman emperor seldom had a tribute of greater verse. Doubtless never again have iambic trimeters been put to so sturdy a use in English. These things are important, but the admirable progression of Marvell's thought is possibly more memorable. Youth turns from books to action because fate has decreed that time is to be cast "into another mould." Against this it is useless to complain—even Charles was powerless to stave off inevitable doom. But, fortunately, the man whose victories proclaim him the agent of destiny is "fit for highest trust." No resistance is possible, provided the hero "march indefatigably on." The English ode had earlier served the uses of philosophy, but never so effectively and pungently.⁶⁷

These Horatian odes set a high standard for encomiastic verse; and even the Pindaric forms which that verse assumed, in one manner or another, adapted the patterns thus established in the seventeenth century. Unquestionably the Roman note predominates, as we shall see, even when the moods and forms reflect Greek or Romantic influence. At its best the English poem of praise is distinguished for sincerity, thought, and enthusiasm. But at its worst—and at its farthest point of separation from the century of Marvell—the encomiastic ode is a startling scarecrow crammed with bombast and official sentimentality.

From this Horatian interlude we turn to the "metaphysical" poets who were zealously dedicated to religion, though the faith to which they subscribed was almost everything of which

⁶⁷ Some of Marvell's earlier poems—for example, "Young Love" (*ibid.*, p. 54)—may have been thought of as odes. See *The Retrospective Review*, XI, 182, for comment on Marvell's Latin verse. What a pity that such a man should have wasted his time denouncing the sins of the Restoration!

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John Milton did not approve. It was not Laud merely, or his theological system sometimes too hastily suspected of having been designed to make the Anglican Establishment agreeable in the eyes of his Queen,⁶⁸ which accounts for that blend of asceticism, Platonic meditation, Catholic practice, and cheerful half-monastic contempt for the world (in the Boethian sense) which distinguishes writers like Vaughan and Herbert. They were products of the deep brooding of the age over the fate of man. Driven by desire to "leave the coloured surface of things"⁶⁹ and "draw from the wells," they cultivated new and semi-Biblical forms of expression. In this respect they were neither novel nor strange, as witness the popularity of the religious epigram from Drummond to Crashaw.⁷⁰ But having given fresh vigor to the ancient eagerness of Sidney to prove the supreme virtue of the pious Muse, they were progenitors of a "sacred ode" bedecked with rhetorical devices garnered from Tasso, Marini, and others and ultimately resembling nothing so much as a peacock on a cloth of gold.

The prosodic ancestor of these poets was Donne, and Donne has little to offer delvers in the history of the English ode.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *A History of English Literature*, by Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian (New York, 1929), p. 568.

⁶⁹ The phrase is Sir Edward Chambers's, quoted in the Preface to the *Oxford Book of Seventeenth Century Verse*, p. v. See Arnold's remark on Tennyson "dawdling with the painted skull of the universe" I am using the term "metaphysical poets" in a somewhat restricted sense. It should doubtless include the Cambridge Platonists. Nothing that seemed pertinent was gleaned from reading the productions of Henry More, though his use of the word "Song" might be subjected to analysis.

⁷⁰ Note should be made also of Francis Quarles, whose *Divine Fancies* (1632) and *Emblems* (1635) proved exceptionally popular. *Emblems* uses several pertinent forms, including *terza rima*.

⁷¹ The only Donne poem actually labeled "ode" is probably spurious (Grieron, *The Poems of John Donne*, II, xxxix). Writers on prosody have, however, often termed the lyrics in "Songs and Sonets" "odes." Thus William Crowe, in *A Treatise on English Versification* (London, 1827), pp. 273-75, points out that odes have either "regular" or "irregular" stanzas and then says that the "regular" stanza may be used in three ways, one of which is, "second, when it is used alternately with another of a different form this is very rare in English poetry, but an instance may be seen in Donne's Poems, under the title of *Love's Growth*."

It may be that, as Grierson says,⁷² "there is no poet the spirit of whose love-poetry is so classical, so penetrated with the sensual, realistic, scornful tone of the Latin lyric and elegiac poets." But who is not conscious of the wide reaches which sunder this poet from the world of antiquity? One may argue to the end of time about whether his mind was enmeshed in medieval speculation or formed by currents of thinking native to the Renaissance.⁷³ Two things are, however, certain: his temper as a creative artist is that of Rabelais and Villon, inseparable from the late medieval university with its fondness for speculation and sensualism alike; and his forms are not those of Greece and Rome, despite everything he owed to the Jesuit humanists. I have often thought that the true ancestors of Donne's lyrics may have been the *Cambridge Songs*. And, for all the fastidiousness and wit poured into them, the irregular stanzas he employs have more in common with the lyric interludes of drama and masque than with the melic patterns of the Greeks or their English imitators.⁷⁴

It has not been sufficiently noted, one thinks, that Donne was also the *spiritual* model of the men who knew him best. If he had not lived wildly, he had at any rate thought and written loosely; and therefore he must have possessed not a little of the dramatic charm of St. Augustine, the sinner snatched from the burning.⁷⁵ No doubt he was often skeptical, troubled, unable to see his way clearly. Copernican science may have sapped some of the strength of his philosophy. But he was a medievalist in the highly important sense that God was *there*

⁷² *Op cit*, II, xxxix

⁷³ See *John Donne and the New Philosophy*, by Charles Monroe Coffin (New York, 1937) Professor Coffin favors the "new philosophy"

⁷⁴ But, of course, there is much that Donne has in common with no one else. The most interesting thing, metrically, about the lyrics is the adroit though seemingly whimsical shift from iambic to trochaic cadence. No one else quite equals him in this, even though the seventeenth century generally resorted to it. Compare James Shirley's "The Glories of Our Blood and State," where the metrical variations are highly effective.

⁷⁵ See *John Donne*, by Augustus Jessop (Boston, 1897), especially Chapter IX.

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regardless of where man might be. Now, by way of contrast, the God of Milton seems always what and where Milton desires Him to be. The Divine laws are those which the author of *Tetrachordon* deems best calculated to ensure the progress and development of his own personality. It is difficult to believe that he could ever have written this line:

Those are my best dayes, when I shake with feare.⁷⁶

Henry Vaughan's *Poems* appeared in 1646. L. I. Guiney⁷⁷ thought there were traces of Milton in this volume and that Vaughan had then run from the influence of one adjudged to be iconoclastic and godless. But whether or not the pamphlets on oligarchy and divorce were important factors in his decision, this Welsh royalist, whose eccentric brother was an Anglican curate with a flair for Rosicrucianism, gradually turned to a life of religious meditation under the spell of Herbert's example.⁷⁸ Echoes of Miltonian and Jonsonian stanzas can be overheard in the earlier poems. Then the religious poets of his own liking became his counselors in the art of versemaking. It is quite impossible to discern what role, if any, the classical masters played in his scheme of things. That he was indirectly an Horatian is, of course, quite clear. *Olor Iscanus* contains translations from Casimir⁷⁹—interesting poems, still worth reading—and in *Choue Poems on Several Occasions* he offered versions of "Some Odes of the Excellent and Knowing Severinus."⁸⁰ Miss Guiney surmised that he might also have read the odes of Fray Luis de León.⁸¹ Plainly, therefore, Vaughan was deeply interested in several neoclassical ode writers; but nothing explains—as his partial depend-

⁷⁶ *Divine Poems*, XIX, Grierson, *op. cit.*, I, 331

⁷⁷ "Milton and Vaughan," *The Quarterly Review*, CCXX, 353-64

⁷⁸ See the "Biographical Sketch," by H F Lyte, in *Sacred Poems*, by Henry Vaughan (London, 1914)

⁷⁹ *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, edited by Leonard Cyril Martin (Oxford, 1914), I, 85-92

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, II, 628-34. Severinus is Boethius, who wrote in Horatian meters

⁸¹ This is based upon oral statement

ence on Herbert also does not explain—how he came to subordinate poetic form to religious impulse.

The great hymns of *Silex Scintillans*⁸² are as wayward prosodically as the most impetuous mystic could desire. In the "Water-Fall," a long irregular stanza is followed by twenty-eight lines of tetrameter couplet.⁸³ In form, "Affliction" is not unlike the shorter odes of Milton.⁸⁴ As a rule, however, Vaughan's poems repeat the initial stanza with relative fidelity. "The World" is written in clusters of fifteen lines in which the pentameter and dimeter predominate. "I Walkt the Other Day" is regularity itself.⁸⁵ Whence Vaughan derived these forms—whether from Donne through Herbert, or from Milton, Drummond, or the neoclassicists—must remain a matter for conjecture. Perhaps it may be suggested that the Psalms were the strongest single source of influence. New versions had been appearing in rapid succession.

Henceforth no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between the religious ode modeled directly or indirectly on Pindar and the elaborate hymn. It may well be that any identification of the two is historically incorrect—that there was no intention on the part of any notable number of hymn writers and religious poets to copy the Greek forms; but the results, as we now have them, make any division arbitrary. "The World," for example, cannot be termed anything save a great religious ode. It is a vision of life unfolded in a succession of luminous images. Compared with the same kind of

⁸² For the texts, see *Sacred Poems*

⁸³ Metrically this poem may be derivative from Donne. At any rate, its association of short and long lines, as well as the blending of trochee and iamb, suggests his practice rather than that of Jonson or Milton.

⁸⁴ There is an interesting anticipation of Cowley in the lines
Thou wouldst to weeds and thistles quite disperse,
And be more wild than is thy verse

⁸⁵ If this is not a "religious ode," it ought to be. The stanza pattern is 5252523, rhyming *abbaacc*, and is doubtless akin to then current versions of the Psalms. By rhyming five-foot and two-foot lines, Vaughan achieves an extraordinary effect of airy lightness. This poem is, no doubt, one of the greatest elegiac hymns in any language.

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poem written earlier in the century, for instance, Drummond's beautiful "Amidst the Azure Clear"⁸⁶ or Jonson's "A Hymne on the Nativitie of My Saviour," Vaughan's hymn is prosodically more complex and inspirationally more "mystical." Those critics who feel that he was ignored in his time may be right, perhaps, but for some strange reason Vaughan's verse indicated the direction in which religious writing was going.

I have put Vaughan before George Herbert because in Herbert's case the ode tradition is of lesser importance. Yet his example as a pastor and "saint" and the poetic method he derived from Donne and possibly Marini meant a great deal to poets of his own and later times. His power lay in the fact that he had disassociated himself from the controversies and political maneuvers of his age and sought out the primitive and patristic Christian faith. Therewith he became a classicist, too, in his way, but his was a classicism not of Pindar and Horace but of Ambrose and Prudentius.⁸⁷ Herbert's Latin verse contains essays in Horatian meters, but the waters of Arethusa are not in them. It is likewise futile to wonder whether the stanza of such a poem as "The Starre" may have been derived from a Latin or English ode model; for the antithesis upon which the form depends is not rhetorical or even copied from Donne but is Augustinian and expresses spiritually recognized duality:

Get me a standing there, and place
Among the beams, which crown the face

⁸⁶ Chalmers, V, 675. There are resemblances to the "Nativity" Ode, as, for example

The flood a throne her rear'd
Of waves most like that Heaven
Where beaming stars in glory turn enspher'd
The air stood calm and clear,
No sigh by winds was given,
Birds left to sing, herds feed, her voice to hear

⁸⁷ See the Introduction to *The Works of George Herbert, in Prose and Verse*, edited by Robert Aris Willmott (London, n.d.), p. xxii "Many of his curiosities of fancy have a Patristic, rather than a poetic ancestry, and are to be sought in Chrysostom or Cyprian, instead of in Donne or Marini"

Of him, who dy'd to part
Sinne and my heart.⁸⁸

The mystic is permanently north and south, matter and spirit, light and darkness, unified in a consciousness which chains together fleetingly things that are eternally running from each other. Of the humanist one may say, perhaps, that his is an attempt to sunder, to break up, to individualize things which are permanently together—man and nature, man and woman, splendor and royalty. Of Herbert it might possibly be said that he was both a mystic and a humanist.⁸⁹

For many, Herbert has remained a sure and popular guide. Crashaw paid him a tribute.⁹⁰ The Oxford Movement⁹¹—and, it may be added, nearly every endeavor to restore the energies of Anglo-Catholicism—was nurtured on *The Temple*. Even in our time such notable religious poets as the author of *In the House of My Pilgrimage*⁹² follow in the footprints of Herbert; and his influence on verse writing of the past was surprisingly great.

We shall witness the full flowering of the seventeenth-century religious ode in Crashaw. Here the discussion of the "metaphysical" poets may be closed with a reference to three comparatively minor but rewarding writers. Thomas Traherne was a lesser and later Vaughan in verse and a greater Vaughan

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁸⁹ Herbert was no "mystic" in the sense that John Robins was one. See *The Declaration of John Robins* (London, 1651), p. 6: "I have receiv'd the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and have had great things revealed to me . . . As for humane learning I never had any, my Hebrew, Greek, and Latine, comes by inspiration." Quoted in *John Bunyan Mechanick Preacher*, by William York Tindall (New York, 1934), p. 248. All this Herbert repudiated, as tending to exalt another authority above Scripture. See *A Century of Anglo-Catholicism*, by Herbert Leslie Stewart (New York, 1929), pp. 261–62. In general, see *George Herbert and His Times*, by A. G. Hyde (London, 1906).

⁹⁰ See the Preface in Willmott, *op. cit.*, p. vi.

⁹¹ See, for example, *Letters and Correspondence of John Henry Newman* (London, 1903), II, 392.

⁹² See, for example, "Roundel of Passion-Tide," in *The Pilgrim and Other Poems, by the Author of "In the House of My Pilgrimage"* (London, 1928), p. 32.

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in prose.⁹³ His hymns are, I think, derivative from Donne in all major aspects of style, though the temperament of their author is continually tracing arabesques over the basic patterns.⁹⁴ The consequence is that Traherne's verse is frequently Elizabethan in texture, suggesting the lyric measures of the song writers. That it is often based on a highly irregular stanzaic pattern is, of course, no indication of affinity with the ode tradition. "The Rapture" is an excellent hymn reflecting a joyousness one might almost expect to find associated with an earthly love in the music books of Thomas Bateson or John Dowland. Even "An Hymne upon St. Bartholomew's Day," which comes nearer, perhaps, than any of Traherne's other lyrics to the formal arrangements of Vaughan, employs a stanza which ends in a one-foot line—exactly at the opposite pole from the measured sonorousness of the classical writers.⁹⁵ When Traherne uses elaborate measures, as in "My Spirit," he bogs down under the weight.

Joseph Beaumont is a lesser Herbert, whose metrical schemata are often quaint, sometimes pleasing, and occasionally outrageous. But his are mystical, gnomic poems, usually built round philosophical conceits more naive than those of Herbert and frequently quite startling.⁹⁶ Then there was Edward Benlowes, friend of Phineas Fletcher and deviser of the most Gargantuan exaggerations known even to his time. He introduced into *Theophila's Love-Sacrifice* a nine-stanza lyric preceded by an invocation to the Virgin, one line of which reads:

⁹³ For texts of the poems named, see *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*, edited by Gladys I. Wade (London, 1932).

⁹⁴ Traherne was "well acquainted with the writings of Herbert, but was not influenced by them . . . It is likely enough that he owed something to Donne" *Ibid.*, pp. lxxvi-lxxvii. This judgment appears more absolute than is warranted.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 223-25. The pattern here is 45455241. On John Dowland, see *The Poetical Decameron, or Ten Conversations on English Poets and Poetry*, by J. Payne Collier (London, 1820), I, 161.

⁹⁶ See *The Minor Poems of Joseph Beaumont*, edited by E. Robinson (Boston, 1914).

For whose surpassing splendour I this ode designed.⁹⁷

Benlowes's stanza is a kind of *terza rima*, which a goodly number of seventeenth-century poets affected, Lovelace being an example.⁹⁸

To some extent the "metaphysicals" were doubtless victims of their time; but on the other hand they contributed to it the virtue of creative ferment. Dr. Johnson said they "were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavor."⁹⁹ It might have been more judicious to say that they were men who had reached the point where learning was no longer a self-sufficient realm. For were they not—as we moderns are in a position to surmise—*am Ende der Philosophie?* Donne seldom makes a mere display of his erudition, being at his best eager to show that in all truly serious duels (such as the duel between the body and the soul) the intellect is slain with its own rapier. But as in every other period when the serviceability of humanistic convention is denied, the bizarre soon became a mere stylistic convenience. Nominalism infected what had at first been a logical quest pursued with ardor and intellectual conviction. One may say, therefore, that much was given the English ode by the "metaphysicals" but that not all the largesse was gold. ✓

Not a little of what they gave is reflected in the books of secular poetry which graced the Caroline period. Few of these are of direct concern to the historian of the ode, except in so far as Waller and Herrick illustrate changing conceptions of the relationship between music and verse. Thus Waller,

⁹⁷ See Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, I, 377 Benlowes also employs the term "Poetic Descant," suggesting Crashaw For his association with Fletcher, see *Phineas Fletcher*, by Abram Barnett Langdale (New York, 1937), pp 89 ff, where the friendship with Quorles is also indicated

⁹⁸ One of the finest examples is Rochester's "On Nothing," the text of which is in *English Odes*, by Edmund Gosse (New York, 1881), p 77 There are earlier examples, one being Sidney's translation of Horace's "Rectius vive," in his *Complete Works*, II, 307

⁹⁹ *Johnson's Lives of the Poets*, edited by Arthur Waugh (London, 1896), I,

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though a representative Latinist, left Horatian forms unused, however greatly he may have profited by the *Sermones* and the Epistles. He clung to the patterns of English song tradition in a time when ancient practice was giving way to the impact of new theory. "Puerperium" ¹⁰⁰ is a notorious instance of the ditty written to fit a melody seemingly unwilling to mate with verse.

But Richard Lovelace, whose *Lucasta* appeared in 1649 and whose reputation as an "elegant poet" is attested to by the eagerness with which the composers of Charles I's time set his verse to music,¹⁰¹ is an illustration of the complex character of seventeenth-century poetic development. If it be true that Lovelace was among the gay blades who frequented Fleece Tavern for the sake of its witty and perhaps dissolute conversation,¹⁰² he keeps his verse unspotted by shadows from that institution, though he does seem to illustrate more fully than anyone else the various formative influences to which a writer of that time was subjected. In general Lovelace makes no clear distinction between "song" and "sonnet." In both instances he uses variations of a familiar songbook stanza, though the "sonnets" are relatively brief. The pattern may be, for example, 54335335 rhyming *aabbccdd*. When he writes odes Lovelace seems, however, to favor a quatrain stanza, the reason being (one surmises) Horatian example. At all events, the "Ode Set by Dr. John Wilson" ¹⁰³ suggests the rhythmical ideal which we have seen exemplified in Fanshawe and Marvell:

See! Rosie is her Bower,
Her floore is all this Flower,

¹⁰⁰ Chalmers, VII, 1-84. See Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 284.

¹⁰¹ See *The Cavalier Spirit*, by Cyril Hughes Hartmann (London, 1925). Among those who composed settings for his lyrics were Dr. John Wilson, John Gamble, William Lawes, and John Lanier.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

¹⁰³ *The Poems of Richard Lovelace*, edited by C. H. Wilkinson (Oxford, 1920), p. 23.

Her bed a Rosie next
By a Bed of Roses prest.

Here there are couplet rhymes, but the "Lucasta, Taking the Waters at Tunbridge" ¹⁰⁴ ode uses an *abab* scheme. Apparently one may, therefore, suggest that Lovelace was unaffected by the Pindarizing experiments of Jonson. He would seem to have clung to the Elizabethan song tradition (with many another gentleman poet for company) and to have modeled his departures from this practice upon Horace.

Yet hardly has one ventured to express this opinion than arguments against it begin to appear. The fact that in *Lucasta* Lovelace also writes songs in quatrain stanzas is not to the point, since he employs for this purpose a four-line measure common in the songbooks. Nor is it significant that the "epodes" are in variable meter.¹⁰⁵ What is of importance is the fact that the volume also contains two odes in *terza rima*, which points to a model of a wholly different kind.¹⁰⁶ It was probably Thomas Stanley who introduced this form into ode writing.¹⁰⁷ He did not designate any of his printed poems in this measure an "ode"; and one may assume, perhaps, that Lovelace came by that word through conversation with his friend. In *Posthume Poems*, moreover, there are two odes in the genuine Jonsonian stanza. It is of interest to compare one of these—"Love Inthron'd" ¹⁰⁸—with the "sonnet" de-

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, p 53

¹⁰⁵ "Lucasta's World Epode" is irregular, while "To Lucasta from Prison" is written in quatrains *Ibid*, pp 89, 48.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 95, 105

¹⁰⁷ *Vide infra*, p 96

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p 127 The other ode (p 156) is entitled "Ode" and employs a very curious stanza

That strange force on the ignoble hath renown,
As Aurum Fulminans, it blows Vice down,
'Twere better (heavy one) to crawl
Forgot, then raised, trod on fall,
All your defections now
Are not writ on your brow
Odes to fault give
A shame, must live

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scribed above. The meter is 44443345; the rhyme scheme, *ababccdd*. The difference in effect is manifest at once and testifies to the progress Lovelace was plainly making in the art of verse when adventure and hardship cut short his career. He cannot be termed a great poet on the basis of the work he completed, but there is hardly another writer of Lovelace's time who seems to have responded so aptly to diverse artistic suggestion.

In summing up the findings of this chapter, one may say that in two respects the ode had been carried beyond Jonson. First, there was a notable enrichment of form, due less to any immediate, slavish imitation of classical models than to the impact, upon the bonds of verse, of deeply felt, exalted emotions. Historically every revival of Platonism, whether that be consciously entertained or unwittingly shared, tends to blur the sharp outlines of art molds. Second, the sincere religious emotions of poets as great as Milton and Herbert gave the new writing that was emerging from the chrysalis of the post-Elizabethan time a zest for spacious and intellectually impassioned expression. The English ode would come into its own.

When a fat mist we view, we coughing run.

But that once Meteor drawn, all cry, undone

Apart from the use of the word "ode" in this strangest of Lovelace's irregular stanzas, the passage is interesting because it shows the curious possibilities latent in seventeenth-century diction. Where could one find a stanza that so markedly foreshadows Father Hopkins?

CHAPTER FOUR: *Crashaw, Cowley, and the Pindaric Ode*

THE POETS of whom this chapter is to treat were Milton's contemporaries. Milton's *Poems* of 1645 were followed the next year by Crashaw's *Steps to the Temple*, and still a year later, Cowley's *Mistress* made its bow to the public. Crashaw matriculated at Cambridge in 1632, the year Milton left; and four years later, the precocious Cowley was musing along the banks of the Cam. And yet it may well seem as if an epoch lay between Milton and the others. His work is a summing up—a final rich coda—of the Renaissance. Their verse is borne along upon the baroque tide, that strange outpouring of an energy half-artistic and half-metaphysical, which sometimes leaves the spectator willing to believe that the Gothic impulse was making a desperate and belated effort to break through the disciplined symmetry of the neoclassical forms. Cowley and Crashaw are medievalists, they are classicists, and they are harbingers of modernity. To us it matters most that they assured the longevity of the English ode.

Like Spenser, Richard Crashaw was suspended halfway between religion and aesthetic. Perhaps the bridge between the two was supplied by music, which the poet often praised.¹ One of his ablest recent critics, Ruth Wallerstein, believes² as a

¹ Chalmers' "Life of Crashaw," Chalmers, VI, 552

² *Richard Crashaw a Study in Style and Poetic Development*, by Ruth Wallerstein (Madison, Wis., 1935), pp. 39 ff.

matter of fact that his metrical arrangements were suggested by melodies, and there is much to be said for her point of view. For the moment it is well to remember that, while Miss Wallerstein may be right, music and verse had greatly changed by the middle years of the century. The Elizabethans had been passionately fond of song, but none of them had written "The Weeper." Under Charles I, royal patronage was accorded to music on a scale worthy of great things, and the ancient rights of the musicians' guild were confirmed.³ Even more important was the regard in which the art was held by the cultivated and the genteel. The "metaphysical" poets are inseparable from the lute, or whatever other instrument they may have preferred to the lute. Donne's rugged songs had been set to music;⁴ and we are informed⁵ that Herbert "had a very good hand at the lute, and sett his own lyrics or sacred poems." Crashaw was an able performer, as Milton may have been.⁶ In every department of versemaking the same addiction to tunes prevailed. Carew's songs, Waller's lyrics, the ditties of Lovelace, Benlowes' rhapsodies, the simpler strains of the Fletchers—all were grist to the composer's mill. The habit of singing was widespread.⁷ Aubrey maintains, for example,⁸ that Hobbes kept a book of "prick-song" on his table. Then "at night, when he was abed, and the dores made fast, and was sure nobody heard him, he sang aloud." The author of *Leviathan* was unexpectedly considerate. But he fancied

³ *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, by Sir John Hawkins (London, 1875), Vol II, Chapter CXX and *passim*

⁴ For examples, see Grierson, *Poems of John Donne*, II, 54 ff

⁵ *Letters Written by Eminent Persons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries to Which Are Added Lives of Eminent Men*, by John Aubrey, Esq (London, 1813), III, 593

⁶ *Milton's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, by Ida Langdon (New Haven, 1924), p 40 The poet's father was a musician, whose life and achievement are discussed in *John Milton the Elder*, by Ernest Brennecke (New York, 1938) See also, "Milton and Music," by Sir Frederick Budge, in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 1907-8

⁷ The reign of Charles I witnessed, however, a notable decline in the amount of written music

⁸ *Letters Written by Eminent Persons*, III, 623

that the music "did his lunges good, and much prolonged his life." Even Cromwell possessed a fondness for the art.⁹

And yet when one examines the best Caroline music, that of Henry Lawes¹⁰ and John Playford,¹¹ it is obvious that the composers have sown under a waning moon. The mere fact that Lawes's reputed teacher, John Cooper, altered his name to "Coperario" indicates that the native English tradition was no longer sturdy.¹² And Lawes himself, however intent he may seem on following Campion's injunction that syllable and note must conform perfectly, is far removed from Campion or Byrd. The verbal enthusiasm of the Elizabethans is likewise missing from the ditties, being replaced by a diction either disciplined in accordance with classical example¹³ or bearing the imprint of the speculative intelligence. The Earl of Bridgewater hearkened to the songs in *Comus*, the Royal Family were regaled at Christmas time with Herrick's "odes."¹⁴ A drift towards new forms was manifest in lyric and masque. The way was being prepared for Purcell, Blow, and Handel. I think the major reason was not so much the fact that writing an air for a Waller ditty was quite a different matter from

⁹ Hawkins, *op cit*, II, 577

¹⁰ Henry Lawes, member of a musical family and composer of music for Milton's verse, wrote his best pages for *Ayres and Dialogues* (London, 1653)

¹¹ John Playford, the elder, noted also as a musical theorist, is chiefly known as the author of *Musical Airs and Dialogues* (London, 1653)

¹² *Comus, a Mask*, edited by Henry John Todd (Canterbury, 1798), p 35

¹³ But much verse continued to be written in the Elizabethan manner Thomas Carew was, no doubt, influenced by the ode tradition, as witness the "Song to His Mistress Confined" (text in Chalmers, V, 620) This poem blends three-, four-, and five-foot lines in stanzas descending (I think) from Jonson and not from the songbooks Yet undoubtedly Carew, many of whose lyrics were set to music, thought of himself primarily as a song writer in the style maintained by Francis Beaumont and others in continuation of the Elizabethan tradition See *Poems, with a Maske*, by Thomas Carew, Esq (London, 1651) Sir John Suckling affords even less material for the present survey Undoubtedly he was in debt to the classics and the classicists, as *Sessions of the Poets* indicates Yet he could term a sequence of five irregular stanzas a "sonnet" and write so curious an extravaganza as "Love's World" See *The Works of Sir John Suckling* (London, 1719)

¹⁴ Todd, *Comus, a Mask*, p 36 [in *Hesperides*] "are three or four Christmas odes, sung before the King at Whitehall"

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setting Lodge to music, but, rather, the circumstance that all the arts had changed. The baroque was everywhere in the ascendancy; Italian architectural style and mural painting were altering the princely residences of half of Europe.¹⁵ Insular England might long resist the tide, but could not swim against it perennially.

Therefore it is well to bear in mind, as one takes up the study of Crashaw, that he has often been most highly praised as a translator.¹⁶ He did, as a matter of fact, perform marvels with Marini. Now it is worthy of note that Cambridge was at this time the haunt of poets who were omnivorous readers, if the verse they adapted from foreign literatures is any criterion. Thomas Stanley went to Cambridge, according to the seemingly established chronology, at the age of thirteen;¹⁷ and eight years later (1646) he had prepared for the press a volume of *Poems* containing translations from half a dozen authors.¹⁸ That strange person but astute lover of Donne, Nathaniel Whiting,¹⁹ came to the University somewhat later and apparently read omnivorously there; and though the recusant poet, Sir Edward Sherburne,²⁰ cannot be claimed for Cambridge, he may have caught the disease of translation from Stanley. For no doubt this same Stanley was personally responsible for much of the interest taken in mod-

¹⁵ *Die Kunst des Barock*, by Werner Weisbach (Berlin, 1928)

¹⁶ See, for example, the opinions of Headley and Ellis, quoted in Chalmers, VI, 554

¹⁷ *Dictionary of National Biography*

¹⁸ Among the authors included are Guarrini, Marini, Tasso, Lope de Vega, and Petrarch Stanley (1625-78) was at Cambridge from 1639 to 1641. He was obviously one of the great "creative scholars" of his time, issuing, in addition to a history of philosophy which long remained a standard treatise, translations of Anacreon and Aeschylus. He does not designate any of his lyrics an "ode," but his "Idolater" (Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, III, 104) is exactly what Lovelace's odes in this form are.

¹⁹ Whiting was, however, less a translator from the Italian than an omnivorous reader of Italian literature. See Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, III, 426.

²⁰ His version of Preti's *Salmacis* appeared in 1651. Sherburne also translated from the Greek, Latin, Italian, and French lyric poets, dedicating his first book to Sir Thomas Stanley, father of the poet, who addressed verses to Sherburne (Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II, 152).

ish Romance poets, as Philip Ayres,²¹ William Hammond,²² and John Hall²³ prove.

Hall, it may be said parenthetically here, is a perfect illustration of the bright young scholar who was everything Cambridge dons of that era (he came to the University in 1645, and his poems were published the following year) deemed desirable in youth. He wrote an effusive letter of thanks to Stanley for friendliness and counsel;²⁴ and to his tutor, J. Pawson, he addressed a very interesting ode which is a kind of cross between Jonson and Lovelace. Another poem, "The Lure," suggests Cowley's *Mistress* again and again.²⁵ Thus Hall, however much of a flash in the pan he may have proved to be as a poet, was a fair scholar and what one should term a young writer of extraordinary promise. His diction has

²¹ Ayres, who translated from literally dozens of poets though his Italians are the usual seventeenth-century favorites, also commends "Casimir the Polander." He was an Oxford man. The "Preface" to his *Lyric Poems* (Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II, 269) makes a point of interest because it reveals the difficulty latent in any exact historical study of English poetic form: "I have in most of them executed the proper measure, which in strictness should not reach to the Heroic. To these I say, that I have herein followed the modern Italian, Spanish and French Poets, who always call Lyrics, all such Sonnets, and other small poems, which are proper to be set to music, without restraining themselves to any particular length of verse."

²² Hammond, who translated from the classical languages, wrote a series of poems to Stanley. One of these says in part (Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II, 503)

Content within those narrow walls to dwell,
Yet canst so far that point of flesh out-swell,
That thine intelligence extends through all
Languages which we European call

Ayres has, in addition to Horatian pieces, some interesting odes with choruses, one—"Hope"—being translated "out of the Italian, from Fra. Abbati." I am not sure, but I think this is Antonio Abbatini, one of the first writers of comic opera. See the *Enciclopedia italiana*.

²³ Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II, 177-225

²⁴ The letter has an interesting passage showing that Stanley's poems were circulated in manuscript before publication: "Let me only beg of you that these cherrystones may draw from you your own pearls, which cannot but break themselves a day through that darkness to which you now confine them" (Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, II, 181).

²⁵ Compare, also, "The Soul." Both Hall and Cowley use motifs derived from Epicurean philosophy.

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magic and warm glow; his thought is academic and usually immature, but it is seldom merely callow or officious. There is some evidence to show that he may have been a Puritan. He assuredly was a Platonist.

Ode stanzas, as Hall employs them, are difficult to classify or describe. The following, from "To His Tutor, Master Pawson" is, like a Lovelace pattern, something begotten by the "Metaphysicals" of Jonsonian stock:

And as we go,
We'll mind these atoms that crawl to and fro,
There may we see
One both be soldier and artillery;
Another whose defence
Is only innocence;
One swift as wind,
Or flying hind,
Another slow as is a mounting stone,
Some that love earth, some scorn to dwell
Upon't, but seem to tell
Those that deny there is a heaven, they know of one.

Hall's final Alexandrine is clumsy, but it is there. Oddly nothing else suggests Milton, and much smacks of Donne—and Dr. Bainbrigg, the chastiser.²⁶

The religious odes in particular breathe the spirit of the great Dean of St. Paul's. But they are also—and the observation holds good for the "Metaphysicals" as a group—redolent of the Psalms. This stanza is a transmutation of the *Miserere* into Christian terms:

And though my sins
Be an unnumber'd number, yet
When thou begins
To look on Christ, do then forget
I helped to cause his grief:
If so, Lord, from it grant me some relief.²⁷

²⁶ His proficiency as a chastiser is, of course, legendary. Hall's poem "On Dr. Bainbrigg, Master of Christ's," is a fair sample of mid-century intramural academic encomium.

²⁷ From "An Ode," which begins, "Descend, O Lord."

And the "Ode" which begins,

Lord, send thine hand
Unto my rescue, or I shall
Into mine own ambushments fall,

is Davidian reflection, almost unadorned.²⁸ Hall is not often very good, but he is generally good enough to suggest how high a mark had been set at Cambridge in his time.²⁹

It is likewise quite probable that Crashaw also swam for a time in the orbit of Stanley. It may well be that he owed to this passionate student what he knew of Italian and Spanish literatures.³⁰ For left to himself Crashaw was preeminently a classical scholar and a liturgist.³¹ His Greek verse is probably the best ever written by an English poet of any importance; his Latin poems are highly commendable; and his versions of the great lyrics of the Roman Hymnal are still unsurpassed. It is, therefore, at least highly probable that it was Crashaw who brought Pindar to the attention of Cowley, and not the other way around, as has been suggested.³² No one in the middle seventeenth century could have been as fine a

²⁸ See also "A Pastoral Hymn," the final stanza of which reads
Great Lord, from whom each tree receives,
Then pay's again, as rent, his leaves,
Thou dost in purple set
The rose and violet,
And giv'st the sickly lily white,
Yet in them all Thy name dost write

²⁹ Henry More, the Cambridge "philosophical poet" of this era, is the author of one or the other Vaughanesque effusion that might if necessary be dubbed an ode. See *Philosophical Poems of Henry More*, edited by Geoffrey Bullough (Manchester University Press, 1931). Bullough's Introduction (pp. xiii ff.) affords a good brief description of the anti-Puritan, Platonist group at Cambridge during this period.

³⁰ This should not be taken to imply, of course, that Crashaw knew no Italian. That language appears to have been at the time part of the repertory of every cultured gentleman.

³¹ The "liturgical" habit was then widespread. Saintsbury notes (*Caroline Poets*, III, 100): "Stanley furnished another composer—John Wilson, Professor of Music at Oxford—with the letterpress of *Psalterium Carolinum*, the King's devotions from the *Eikon* versified."

³² For example, by L. C. Martin, in the splendid Introduction to his edition of *The Poems, English, Latin and Greek of Richard Crashaw* (Oxford, 1927).

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Greek scholar as Crashaw undoubtedly was without being tempted to look into Pindar; and yet he may have failed—as Milton also may have failed—to grasp the principle of Pindaric ode construction. Much may have depended upon how the Greek text was printed in the editions at hand. These texts apparently retained the tripartite divisions, but erred in their reading of lines. In so far as Cowley is concerned, everything we know about him as a young poet indicates that he was by temperament and training a Latinist. At any rate, the relationship between the two poets was intimate enough to be important;³³ and though Crashaw termed none of his metrical irregularities Pindaric or Greek, he might conceivably have done so with some show of reason.

Crashaw's was a baroque Muse.³⁴ The point has been duly noted in connection with his manifest faults, primarily that of bizarre overstatement. It is easy to pick from his earlier work, as Kane does, phrases or tropes which illustrate "the extreme of the grotesque and the bizarre."³⁵ Whether this tendency was the result of his reading in Italian and Spanish literatures, or whether it must be traced in the first instance to the stylistic injunctions of Buchlerus,³⁶ is a moot question which need be raised here only to point out that it is largely by reason of his departures from the normal imagistic perspective that Crashaw is attuned to a certain twentieth-century prosodic practice.³⁷ Here we must, however, be concerned with his patterns and meters, since these are in several ways landmarks in the history of the ode.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. xxxiii ff

³⁴ The texts vary a little. I have used the Bodleian copies of *Steps to the Temple* (op. cit.) and *Carmen Deo Nostro* (London, 1652). Martin's seems the best modern edition, but consult also *The Poems of Richard Crashaw*, edited by A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1904).

³⁵ *Gongorism and the Golden Age*, by Elisha K. Kane (Chapel Hill, 1928), p. 150.

³⁶ *Sacrorum profanorumque phrasium poeticarum thesaurus*, by Joannis Buchlerus (London, 1632).

³⁷ See *Phases of English Poetry*, by Herbert Read (London, 1928), pp. 72 ff. The term "imagistic" is used here to indicate the image-making function. It is not employed in the sense in which it is used by "H. D." and others.

None of Crashaw's lyrics is, to be sure, called an "ode," probably for the reason that he, the product of Little Gidding³⁸ and Catholicism, still associated that word with amorousness.³⁹ Moreover, the form of his "hymns" often suggests the Italians. Thus "A Hymn of the Nativity" is a forerunner of what would later be termed the "cantata ode" and may have been based upon either the new "opera" or the Oratorian "Cantata Spirituale."⁴⁰ The music for such a stanza as this would necessarily have been florid and Italianate:

³⁸ See *Nicholas Ferrar Memoirs of His Life*, by P. Peckard (Cambridge, 1790).

³⁹ Benlowes wrote, in *Theophila's Love-Sacrifice*

Say not a noble love to thee he bears;

While's hand writes odes, his eye drops teares.

(Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, I, 438) Thomas Shadwell, in an encomium for songs set by Pietro Reggio (*vide infra*, p. 116), wrote of objectionable amorous poets

A funeral song they chaunt with cheerful mood,

And sigh and languish in a drunken Ode

Even the translators of the Psalms were open to criticism, as witness Joseph Hall ("Satire VIII," Chalmers, VI, 266)

Yea, and the prophet of the heav'nly lyre,

Great Solomon, sings in the English quire,

And is become a new found sonnetist

More precise definitions of the word "ode" can, however, be found, as witness this in Whiting's *Il insonio insonnadero*:

Grave Maro, I remember, in an ode

(An eclogue) treads in the same prophetic road

(Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, III, 547)

⁴⁰ The question of the origins of the cantata and its introduction into England is complex, and is discussed in some detail by Hawkins, *op cit*, and Charles Burney, *History of Music* (London, 1789) The first opera was an amalgam of musical passages, airs, recitatives, and choruses Of more immediate moment here is the fact that St. Philip Neri, founder of the Oratory, appended to the devotional exercises of the Church a series of spiritual songs, some of which were in dialogue form One collection of these was published at Rome in 1603, under the title, *Laudi spirituali di diversi*. It is quite possible that Crashaw may have seen this or a kindred work. Perhaps also a University professor of music may have attempted to perform a similar composition. We know that Dr. Philip Hayes, professor at Oxford during the 1660s, gave "choral concerts" which netted him a profit of "two hundred and fifty three pounds" (Todd, *op cit*, p. 41). On the other hand, the revival of the liturgical forms of worship, which Laud sponsored, necessarily directed attention to the "dialogue" which is so integral a part of Roman Catholic worship, and it may be that Crashaw was thinking of this primarily, rather than of the *Laudi spirituali*

I saw th' officious angels bring
 The down that their soft breasts did strow,
 For well they now can spare their wings,
 When Heaven itself lies here below.
 "Fair youth," said I, "be not too rough,
 Your down, though soft's, not soft enough."

Even so it is not possible to say with certainty whether Crashaw was following a specific Italian practice. He may have been attempting to serve the same liturgical purpose to which the "broken form" of "The Office of the Holy Cross"⁴¹ is dedicated. All these poems have their counterparts in the downpour of odes, written for orchestral accompaniments, which marked the eighteenth century, though it must immediately be added that any direct influence of Crashaw upon the writers of that time cannot be assumed.⁴² In general, however, Crashaw was less dependent upon the Italian models in vogue than is commonly supposed. Thus he translated Marini and Strada, but they taught him nothing of moment about form.⁴³

He was obviously also a close reader of the English poets. Miss Wallerstein is correct in saying⁴⁴ that "at twenty-four or twenty-five, Crashaw had mastered the Spenserian manner." Likewise he learned to use variants of the Jonsonian ode stanzas, and to write his own kind of *terza rima* ode.⁴⁵

⁴¹ There is, to be sure, a marked difference between the "Hymn of the Nativity" and the "Office." The first, with its solos, duets, and choruses, might conceivably have grown out of the pastoral tradition. The second, using a form which closes in each instance with a prayer, is definitely liturgical.

⁴² A possible link between Crashaw and the form under discussion may be the "liturgical hymns" of William Cartwright, cleric beloved of Charles I and poet lauded by Ben Jonson. He was one of the most "seraphic preachers" of his time, and enjoyed fame by reason of his knowledge of Italian and French. Cartwright's "hymns" are in dialogue form, suggesting as much as Crashaw's "Office" does the practice seemingly established by St. Philip Neri. Cartwright died in 1643, the "hymns" having been written for the King's Chapel. See Chalmers, VI, 547-48.

⁴³ For an analysis of Crashaw's treatment of Marini, see Wallerstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 79 ff.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁴⁵ "Wishes to His (Supposed) Mistress," in *Delights of the Muses*. By com-

No doubt the patterns of Herbert, the admired teacher, made the deepest impression of all, suggesting the form of such poems as "Sancta Maria Dolorum" and, above all, the magnificent "In the Glorious Epiphany of Our Lord God."⁴⁶ There is reason to feel that the influence of Milton also counted for something;⁴⁷ and, of course, the younger Crashaw shone principally as a writer of epigrams. Accordingly his place in English verse is secure, regardless of how exotic his diction may be. For he began where others had left off, and added something of his own to the history of the poetic adventure.

Crashaw's best skill was lavished on meter.⁴⁸ His first notable feat is, perhaps, skipping unstressed syllables and thus making his verse depend upon the stresses. From this point of view "The Weeper" is a triumph as signal as Shelley's "Skylark." Indeed, I think the exordium of Crashaw's poem richer in every sense than is that of Shelley's:

Hail sister springs,
Parents of silver-forded rills!
Ever bubbling things!

parison with this poem, with its admirable 234 stanza that ought not to succeed and yet does so, notably, most other seventeenth-century essays in *terza rima* are wooden and unmusical. Building up, with steadily intensifying synecdoches, a picture of ideal womanhood, Crashaw is never surly or insincere. It is a warmly human poem, and it is good that so fine a lyric, marred by no violent conceits, should triumph over the difficulties of epithet and rhyme.

⁴⁶ The "Epiphany" poem is in the dialogue form, with choruses. It is beyond doubt the most philosophical of Crashaw's poems, and I think the comparison with Herbert is to be seen not merely in the phrasing (e.g., the sharp and probing antitheses), but also in the general trend of theological reflection.

⁴⁷ Compare, e.g., Crashaw's "O Gloriosa Domina" with Milton's shorter odes.

⁴⁸ It is not easy to determine the influence of the classical meters on Crashaw's verse. If one studies the provocatively fascinating "On the Glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin," it becomes apparent that the mood of ecstasy is conveyed in part by the extraordinary celerity of the rhythm, and that this in turn is achieved by recourse to choriambics (or possible choriambics) as witness.

Under so sweet a burden, go,
Since thy great Son will have it so,
And while thou goest, our song and we
Will, as we may, reach after thee.

Thawing chrystal! snowy hills!
 Still spending, never spent; I mean
 Thy fair eyes sweet Magdalen.⁴⁹

That, being concerned with woman's tears, naturally seems grossly exaggerated; and of course it is. But can one truthfully say (the question of taste being beyond solution) that it is much more outlandish than Shelley's transformation of a skylark into a heavenly spirit? And, proceeding now to the world of language, where is there a more captivating use of the "i" sound or a more artful arrangement of stresses than is here provided by Crashaw?

One is led to believe that he must have possessed an unusually deep insight into what may be termed the quantitative possibilities of English speech—that is, the use of pauses to create effects similar to those produced in classical verse by the substitution, for example, of spondees for dactyls. Crashaw's feeling for these things is Greek. And his second memorable feat—his success with poems written in irregular stanzas—can likewise be accounted for easily only on the basis of what he had learned from reading Greek verse. "On a Prayer-Book Sent to Mrs. M. E." is, for example, more than a *tour de force*, though it is that, too. Opening with a quatrain akin to the *In Memoriam* stanza, the poem rises gradually through varying stanzaic patterns to that magnificent lyric passage beginning "O fair! O fortunate!" which outdoes Shelley two hundred years before Shelley's time.⁵⁰ The

⁴⁹ This may be the Jonsonian ode stanza, but metrically speaking it is emancipated from all that Jonson held dear

⁵⁰ The stanza may be quoted here

O fair! O fortunate! O rich! O dear!
 O happy and thrice happy she,
 Dear silver-breasted dove,
 Who e'er she be,
 Whose early love
 With winged vows
 Makes haste to meet her morning spouse.
 And close with his immortal kisses,
 Happy soul, who never misses,

pattern, 543222444322433, suggests nothing so much as a cascade of verbal music; and the deft additions of feminine rhyme and trochaic rhythm leave one wondering how it was that so much illustrious artistry could virtually be ignored for centuries.⁵¹

"A Hymn to the Name and Honour of the Admirable Saint Teresa" is, after Milton's Nativity ode, the most illustrious blending of art and hymnody in seventeenth-century verse. It is the model after which Francis Thompson and his disciples consciously or unconsciously wrote. Crashaw errs here, as elsewhere, by scattering his jewels with too lavish a hand. The poem is exordium, encomium, doctrine, prayer, all in one; it storms Heaven with venturesome antitheses, hyperboles, and variations on the muted strings; and the mood shifts from sententious reflection to lyric ecstasy.⁵² The sole constants are the four-stress lines and the couplet rhymes, and they show off to greater advantage the highly subtle and melodious prosodic structure. Certainly few poets have ever bedecked a profane love with more splendor than Crashaw

To improve that precious hour
And every day
Seize her sweet prey,
All fresh and fragrant as he rises,
Dropping with a balmy show'r
A delicious dew of spices

Writing in *Notes and Queries* (Vol V, No. 449), D F McCarthy suggested a number of resemblances between Crashaw and Shelley. There ensued an interesting discussion, during the course of which it was noted that "Musick's Duel" was reprinted in Leigh Hunt's *Indicator* for May, 1820. It is not likely, however, that Shelley actually learned prosody from Crashaw. The resemblances are coincidental.

⁵¹ Chalmers (VI, 553-54) reprints Pope's letter to Cromwell. It said in part "I take this poet to have writ like a gentleman, that is, at leisure hours, and more to keep out of idleness than to establish a reputation, so that nothing regular or just can be expected of him." He offended the eighteenth century by the rapture of the language he used in discussing religious matters, and of course he was frowned upon by divines as a sinner who had relapsed into the darkness of Rome. But I believe Dryden took some things from Crashaw. For a discussion of his reputation between 1646 and 1650, cf Martin's Introduction (*op cit*, p xxxix).

⁵² For a discussion of Crashaw's religious attitudes, see *The Metaphysical Poets*, by Helen C White (New York, 1936), pp 176-201.

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here throws round the Immortal Eros.⁵³ To the writers of the 1650s, this poem must have seemed what it really was—the culmination of one great English poetic adventure. I am quite sure that its influence persisted throughout later elaborate hymnody, just as I feel that the incentive given to Cowley was decisive.

Some importance attaches, therefore, to the personal relationship between the two poets. They had known each other at Cambridge; and in 1646 they met in France, where Cowley was in the entourage of the Queen and able to render some service to his friend, then a sufferer from poverty and distress.⁵⁴ Together they had written "On Hope," in the form of a dialogue.⁵⁵ It was probably due to Cowley's efforts that a post in Italy was offered to Crashaw. Then there appeared in *Miscellanies* the ode "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw" which is, perhaps, Cowley's most straightforward and moving poem. The concluding lines are significant:

Lo here I beg (I whom thou once didst prove
So humble to Esteem, so Good to Love)
Not that thy Spirit might on me Doubled be,
I ask but Half thy mighty Spirit for Me.
And when my Muse soars with so strong a Wing,
'Twill learn of things Divine, and first of Thee to sing

Doubtless this should be read to mean that Cowley had long been interested in writing religious verse, and not that he had been converted to such a course by the example of his friend. Naturally this does not alter the fact that he was of a more rationalistic temperament than was Crashaw.

Nevertheless, Cowley was natively and by choice an Horatian, as witness his *Mistress*, which is by all odds the finest

⁵³ This splendor must not all be traced to Marini. As a matter of fact, Crashaw plainly outgrew the Italian influence, and in the poem under consideration is not more extravagant than Spenser and Shakespeare are.

⁵⁴ See *Abraham Cowley*, by Arthur Hobart Nethercot (New York, 1932), pp 97-99.

⁵⁵ See Martin, *op cit*, Introduction.

collection of amorous verse written during the century and probably the best book of its kind in our literature.⁵⁶ To say this is to imply that the Pindarick form,⁵⁷ to which he gave so great a vogue, has tended to obscure the true character of Cowley's genius. We shall see, rather clearly, that the irregular stanzas he borrowed from the Greek lost all Attic flavor in this essentially Latinist poet's hands. From the beginning Cowley had taken his Roman authors seriously. The odes in *Sylva* (1637)⁵⁸ are Horatian (and Jonsonian) exercises in varied but disciplined verse. Strangely enough, even the six-line stanzas of such a typical lyric as "To His Mistress" rhyme by couplets—surely an unusual choice at that time by one who could still speak of his "childish Muse." Happily he varied his practice in the *Mistress*, though the farthest he retreated from it even there was to the *ababccdd* stanza of "Eccho." Still the collection has a wide prosodical variety which is achieved by varying the stanza and the line, and not by reason of some law inherent in the thought or image underlying the poem (as in Donne). The explanation is, one thinks, deliberate choice hit upon with consummate virtuosity.

The striking novelty and distinction of these poems is due, however, to the especial verbal brilliance which pervades them—a brilliance without precedent in our literature unless it be the dialogue of *Love's Labour's Lost*. Sometimes a modern reader feels that antithesis—which he forgives in Donne because of the earthiness and Ovidian subtlety which there weight it down—is leading Cowley around by the nose:

Deep into her bosom would I strike the dart;
Deeper than woman e're was struck by Thee;

⁵⁶ *Abraham Cowley Poems*, edited by A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1905), pp. 63-152.

⁵⁷ Hereafter the term "Pindarick" will be used to indicate the form devised by Cowley, and "Pindaric" to indicate poems based on the tripartite arrangement of Pindar.

⁵⁸ *Abraham Cowley Essays, Plays and Sundry Verses*, edited by A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1906), pp. 61-65.

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Thou giv'st them small wounds, and so from th' Heart,
They flutter still about, inconstantly.

Curse on thy Goodness, whom we find
Civil to none, but Woman-kind! ⁵⁹

But then comes luminous poetry, comparable with the best:

Then like some wealthy Island thou shalt ly,
And like the Sea about it, I;
Thou like fair Albion, to the Sailors Sight,
Spreading her beauteous bosom all in White,
Like the kind ocean I will be,
With loving arms forever clasping Thee. ⁶⁰

It is little wonder that the century should have felt its "Wits" ⁶¹ had been worth enduring if such a result could finally be achieved. A cosmopolitan urbanity had come to England: Cowley was at best only a distant relative of the "Metaphysicals," ⁶² resembling them in dictional audacity but not in poetic or intellectual quality; and his descendants are often very modern in spirit, indeed, dazzling the temperate Englishman with paradox and learning, as witness Peacock and Beerbohm. There is an inveterate fondness for the grotesque in Cowley which led Courthope to overhear in his verse "the last accents of the Middle Ages." ⁶³ Nevertheless we of the present detect more unmistakably still a note of modernity, compounded half of dissonance and half of abstract melody. It is not at all surprising that many who have sought to "go back to Donne" have really reverted to Cowley.

From the especial point of view of this study, it must be

⁵⁹ From "The Monopoly"

⁶⁰ From "Coldness"

⁶¹ It is seldom sufficiently recognized that "wit" in the sense employed was a direct outgrowth of late Scholasticism, with its instinct for quibbling and its tireless resort to the *distinguo* on the one hand, and its domination by the (Suarezian) concept of the intellect as *fabricator* (i.e., builder of universals) on the other hand. Against all this Milton rebelled violently.

⁶² See "A Note on Two Odes of Cowley," by T. S. Eliot, in *Seventeenth Century Studies Presented to Sir Herbert Grierson* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 235 ff.

⁶³ Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, III, 376.

added that while these poems are manifestly outgrowths of Cowley's early concern with Horatian and Anacreontic forms, they also embody ~~what he learned from his precursors~~ and contemporaries. The stanzas are those of *Sylva*, though the number of lines and the position of the short lines are varied more frequently. But Cowley obeys all the important conventions of the English ode tradition established by Jonson: fondness for terse, epigrammatical stanza endings; a half-playful, half-reverent use of mythology; and an enamel of learning that would smack of pedantry if it were applied more seriously. Just as Horace meant the passing of Vergil, the brilliant Cowley might have meant the passing of Dryden had the time been more favorable and were the *pietas* of the Englishman a mortal thing.

Yet this same Cowley was no worldling, but a scholar and a religious man. His writings and his friends are proofs of that. And so, when one comes to the much-abused Pindaricks,⁶⁴ it is well to remember (a) that Cowley was certainly trained to understand the Greek originals better than most of his critics since Congreve have assumed;⁶⁵ and (b) that he turned to Pindar because he was a fount of lofty, profound, and deeply religious verse. On both matters his Preface to the 1668 edition of his poems is the best commentary.⁶⁶ Cowley says, to be sure, that the "Numbers are various and irregular"; but by this is meant simply that the lines may differ in length and that there is no fixed stanza scheme. What he emphasizes above all is the "Temeritie" of Pindar's imagery and the length and suddenness of his digressions. These

⁶⁴ See "Pindarique Odes" (*Poems*, pp. 155-238), "Verses Written on Several Occasions" (*ibid.*, pp. 402-53), and "Miscellanies" (*ibid.*, pp. 15-62).

⁶⁵ See Nethercot, *op. cit.*, pp. 136 ff., and the same author's "The Relation of Cowley's 'Pindaricks' to Pindar's Odes," in *Modern Philology*, XIX, 107-9. Congreve made the first case against Cowley in *Discourse on the Pindaric Ode* (London, 1706). The classic statement for the negative is Dr. Johnson's, in *Life of the Poets*, edited by Arthur Waugh (London, 1896), I, 59-62.

⁶⁶ *Poems*, pp. 10-11, and of course also the Preface to the "Pindarique Odes," *ibid.*, pp. 155-56.

points were stressed by ancient critics, one of whom Cowley quotes.⁶⁷ On the other hand, it may be that he did not distinguish between strophe, antistrophe, and epode. Gosse⁶⁸ argued that he failed to do so, and suggested imperfect seventeenth-century Pindaric texts. There is little if any evidence to support the contention.⁶⁹ If Cowley was at fault here, if he really did not note the tripartite regularity of the Pindaric ode,⁷⁰ his was (in the language of the Church) a *felix culpa*, for what has English poetry to do with rhythms designed to conform with the lost Greek arts of song and dance? ⁷¹ It is as plain as can be that the true Pindaric has succeeded in English only once or twice at the most. Cowley's Pindarick remains, however, what it has been during more than two centuries—the form, however varied or recast, which best serves the writer of the longer impassioned lyric. One may add that Cowley did not derive the notion of Pindar's "wildness" from the Greek odes. He took it from Horace, and stated that the term was probably based on Pindar's practice in the lost "Dithyrambics."⁷²

⁶⁷ Dionysius of Halicarnassus

⁶⁸ *English Odes*, p. xv

⁶⁹ *Abraham Cowley, sa vie, son œuvre*, by Jean Loiseau (Paris, 1931), pp. 349-51

⁷⁰ In this case he would also be found unfamiliar with Jonson's verse, and beyond that with all that had followed the "reform" work of The Pleiade in France. All over Europe the Pindaric was generally understood correctly. Thus (e.g.) the Pindaric odes of Rudolf Weckherlin in *Oden und Gesaenge* (Stuttgart, 1619) keep up the tripartite arrangement. Even if Cowley had been ignorant of all this, it seems virtually impossible that there would not have been among his acquaintances some scholarly person who would have set him right.

⁷¹ Students of the period could have gleaned some information about the close relationship between Greek music and verse from the ancient critics, notably Dionysius, ably summarized for modern readers in *Greek Rhetoric and Literary Criticism*, by W. Rhys Roberts (New York, 1928), p. 88 and *passim*. But there is no evidence to show that anyone did. A rough collaboration between the poet and the composer was assumed, of course, but the niceties of Greek rhythm—which was not at all "song" in our sense of the term—went almost wholly unnoticed, just as the art theories of Pindar himself were ignored.

⁷² Cowley translates Horace thus (*Poems*, p. 178)

So Pindar does new Words and Figures roul
Down his impetuous Dithyrambic Tide,
Which in no Channel deigns t'abide,
Which neither Banks nor Dikes controul

At any rate,⁷³ Cowley's numerous poems in this form—or lack of form, if one prefers—produce in the main three effects. First, they give free rein to the poet's "wit,"⁷⁴ which then rears and paws about in a fashion which sometimes only too completely justifies his own poetic injunction in the "Resurrection":



Stop, stop, my Muse, allay thy vigorous heat,
Kindled at a hint so great.
Hold thy Pindarique Pegasus closely in,
Which does to rage begin.

Still at their best these poems do have a rich eloquence which may not always be poetry as we have come to understand the word, but which normally remains far above the level, say, of the verse in Saintsbury's *Caroline Poets*. Second,⁷⁵ they permit of prosodic experimentation which must not be judged by the use it makes of "emotion recollected in tranquillity", but which as a medium for the coruscating intelligence is highly impressive and successful. Cowley is merely baroque to a point bound to exasperate even those who do not dislike the baroque under any and all circumstances.

If one studies the poems from the structural point of view, it will be found that on the whole they are more regular—i.e., more nearly monostrophic—than their reputation would have it. The translations from Pindar are, for example, written predominately in various arrangements of four and five stress lines. "Life and Fame" is also comparatively even, and the first two stanzas of "Life" differ little from each other.⁷⁴ "Destinie," on the other hand, contains a large number of three-stress lines and ends with a queer seven-footer. Yet here, too, the device is not juxtaposition of highly variegated stanzas, but rather a varying arrangement of long and short lines. Sometimes, as in the "Resurrection," special effects are

⁷³ Compare on this topic, Cowley's own "Of Wit"

⁷⁴ The structure of this poem approximates, as a matter of fact, to the tripartite arrangement, the final stanza (of three) being unlike the other two.

obtained ⁷⁵—at least in the poet's intention—by the verbal and metrical patterns adopted. The music of language becomes a matter of minor import. Cowley was, if his verse is any criterion, singularly deaf to the melody of language as the Elizabethans or the Romantics have understood that. And he was not a poet of the senses. Only the sea appears to have awakened him to the presence of sheer natural beauty.⁷⁶

At this point one may compare to good advantage Cowley's "The Plagues of Egypt" with Crashaw's "The Name of Jesus." The selections are purposely random ones. If the first were printed as is the second—without being divided into stanzas—there would be little to choose on the score of irregularity. The pattern of Cowley's first twenty-eight lines is 5554555526555256534655554645, rhyming *aabbcc-ddeeffegghijjhhikllkmmnn*.

That of Crashaw's is

4444444455555522552355533252, rhyming *aabbcc-ddeeffgghhijjkklljjm*.

Cowley departs from absolute metrical regularity only in so far as four lines begin with trochaic feet. Crashaw likewise has four initial inversions, and in addition omits one short syllable. "The Name of Jesus" is, however, a singularly musical poem in which all the senses have their roles. In the lines referred to, Crashaw suggests in order the sensations, of touch, light, song, warmth, motion, space. Cowley, in the same number of lines, evokes only the general sensations of pain, pleasure, and gluttony. Both poets are concerned with the weakness of man and the greatness of God; but whereas Crashaw's exordium is a paean of praise, Cowley's is an ethical discussion which relies chiefly on argumentative intellectual antitheses. While, therefore, the advantage is with

⁷⁵ The third stanza opens with "Thunder's dismal noise," and the verse describes the terror and confusion that follow

⁷⁶ The sea recurs constantly in Cowley's verse. I have counted sixteen instances in the *Mistress* alone.

Cowley in so far as "wildness" is concerned, the disparity on the score of irregular measure is by no means great.⁷⁷

Therewith we arrive somewhat belatedly at the third effect of Cowley's Pindarick adventure—unity of composition despite irregularity of form. [The sequence of irregular ode stanzas could be made to hang together more securely than did the sonnet sequence, which it was to some extent destined to replace.⁷⁸ One may trace to their Pindaric origins a myriad poetic disasters; but the fact nevertheless remains that Cowley wedded logic to verse in what has proved to be, on the whole, a happy marriage.] His odes are normally based upon an idea, to convey which he hits upon some figure of speech likely as not to be taken from the garden in which he loved to embed his speculation—the natural sciences. Each stanza then develops part of the idea and the image, but Cowley almost never loses sight of the poem as a whole.⁷⁹ This has a point to make, and succeeds in doing so while making any number of bright lesser points along the way. Thus in "The Exstasie" the poet suffers his imagination to bear him aloft into heavenly regions, even as the prophet Elijah was borne in the body.⁸⁰ An attempt is made to describe the successive stages of the sublimation—what at first resembles, quaintly enough, a take-off in a modern plane, suddenly becomes initiation into the mysteries of the spiritual world. Then Cowley turns to what has stirred his visionary fancy, and describes in vivid and sustained poetry the ascent of Elijah. Even so, his own feet remain firmly on the ground, as witness these

⁷⁷ Crashaw's poem has passages more irregular than the exordium. He even has one seven-foot line.

And couch before the dazzling light of thy dread majesty

⁷⁸ Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, II, 340, "these irregular semi-lyrical stanzas have shown themselves quite as able to provide a poet with wings to soar as they are to provide a poetaster with weights to sink."

⁷⁹ From this point of view "The Plagues of Egypt" is a remarkable achievement. Few poems have ever been more heavily laden with learning, puns, and images. Nevertheless the plan supports everything because it is soundly conceived.

⁸⁰ This poem is probably an adaptation of Casimir's "E rebus humanis excessus" (*Carmina*, Liber II, Ode V). If so it is further indication of the Horatian substructure of Cowley's prosody.

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lines which are almost the quintessence of his later point of view and method:

Astonisht Men who oft have seen Stars fall,
Or that which so they call,
Wondred from hence to see one rise

The mortal risk such poetry incurs is, of course, that the intellect, or whatever takes its place, may supplant all genuine poetic feeling. This Cowley no doubt realized, and thence came his recourse to praise of Pindar's "Enthusiastical manner" and his profession of being "Transported by a holy fury." Unfortunately the "holy fury" is sometimes hardly more than learned logomachy. Yet for those who can share the poet's emotions, few of Cowley's Pindaricks are without genuinely moving passages. Dryden reduced the third stanza of the "Resurrection" to a few superb lines, and yet ~~it is a strangely magnificent passage, reminiscent of baroque frescoes in seventeenth-century Continental churches.~~ "The Plagues of Egypt" is in itself almost a visitation, but I submit that the "Ode Sitting and Drinking in the Chair, Made out of the Reliques of Sir Francis Drake's Ship" is a fine and noble English poem,⁸¹ richer and subtler than Herrick, and quite as good as Drayton. Cowley's political odes, no doubt mildly influential, are even yet tolerably good reading. "Upon His Majesties Restoration and Return" was a first-rate leading editorial in honor of the occasion. And the majority of his eulogistic odes are very beguiling, indeed.

⁸¹ This poem effectively contrasts the love of roaming with the love of rest without letting either mood get out of hand

Great Relique! thou too, in this Port of ease,
Hast still one way of Making Voyages,
The breath of fame, like an auspicious Gale,
(The great Trade-wind which ne're does fail,)
Shall drive thee round the World, and thou shalt run,
As long around it as the Sun

It was set to music in *Choice Songs and Ayres* . . . *Composed by Several Gentlemen of His Majesties Musick* (London, 1673)

These poems succeeded, when they did, by reason of other qualities than Cowley's intellectualistic brilliance and native eloquence alone.⁸² His verse earned the bubble reputation rather than any solid sum, but its effect on those minds which shrank from the shallowness and license of the Restoration era was surprisingly great. He had been struck with the "Temeretic" of Pindar's images, and in turn impressed others with the boldness of his own.⁸³ And the stress laid in his work on the external rather than on the interior life, on the oratorical rather than the poetic, on the triumphantly voluble rather than the tenaciously reticent, was of central importance to the time.⁸⁴ The Civil Wars, banishing the monarchy and with it a goodly number of poets and scholars, inured the minds of many Englishmen to what has often been somewhat vaguely denominated "neoclassicism." It was more properly a world of bright new baroque churches, Cartesian philosophy, Pascal, Bossuet, and the Jansenists. It may well seem to the historian, however, that trends in the practice of the art of music affected the development of English poetry at least as profoundly as anything else. The hostility of the Puritans gave the deathblow to an English musical tradition already moribund. True enough, the amateur who was half poet and half lutanist continued to flourish throughout the

⁸² Cowley is almost the first poet who suggests that the verdict which Paul Hankamer reaches concerning the seventeenth-century intellect in his own country may also apply to England. "Das Wort Schaffen darf hier nur im Sinne der reinen Erkenntnis durch Konstruktion gemeint werden" *Deutsches Gegenreformation und deutsches Barock* (Stuttgart, 1935), p. 85

⁸³ It is of course true that Cowley did not grasp the inner law of Pindar's phrase. To him hyperbole and paradox seemed twin gateways to effective speech. Who can imagine a Greek poet writing such lines as these, though the suggestion may have come from Pindar's praise of heroes

Scarce could the Sword dispatch more to the Grave,
Then Thou couldst save,
By wondrous Art, and by successful care
The ruins of a Civil War thou dost alone repair.

From "To Dr. Scarborough"

⁸⁴ A writer in the *Retrospective Review* (XII, 360) attributes the extravagant language to the influence of the Court, adjudged to have favored extravagance

century;⁸⁵ and the song writer who could meet the popular or the sophisticated demand plied a busy trade.⁸⁶ Thus portions of Cowley's *Mistress* were set to music by William King⁸⁷ and Pietro Reggio.⁸⁸ But the Restoration brought new modes of composition to the fore, as we shall see.

Cowley's renown may, therefore, have been due first of all to the fact that his reflective "wit" shone more brilliantly than did the minds of so many dissolute Restoration men of letters, and second to the circumstance that his verse was so marked a departure from the sensuous, musical language of ~~Milton and Crashaw~~.⁸⁹ It glittered, it was hard as steel, but it was also poetry. The Pindarick afforded scope to his zest for paradoxical and bizarre utterance. But in the hands of the many lesser folk who now essayed it, the irregular ode became a rambling verse essay sprinkled with grotesque and bombastic phrases.⁹⁰ Their "Pegasus" raged incessantly—proved, as a matter of fact, the most intractable beast of which English poetry has record. A writer once advocated a systematic study of the worst English poetry, on the ground

⁸⁵ For example, Marvell's "Dr Ingelo" (Dr Nathaniel Ingelo) wrote Latin odes which Benjamin Rogers set to music. See Marvell, *Poems*, I, 178 footnote. Hawkins, *op cit*, II, 582, says that John Wilson "composed music to sundry of the odes of Horace extant in a manuscript curiously bound in Turkey leather" Thomas Tomkins, organist and composer, issued *Songs*, No. 21 of which was dedicated to Phineas Fletcher (see Langdale, *op cit*, p. 45). Many others could be enumerated.

⁸⁶ Indices to the average taste of the period are afforded by *The English Parnassus, or a Sure Guide to those Admirable Accomplishments That Complement Our English Gentry*, by T. Cotgrave (London, 1655), and (*vide infra*, p. 133) *Wit and Mirth or Pills to Purge Melancholy*, by Thomas Durfey (London, 1719).

⁸⁷ *Poems of Mr Cowley and Others Composed into Songs and Ayres*, by William King (Oxford, 1668).

⁸⁸ *Songs set by Pietro Reggio* (folio, apparently 1680). The volume contains music for four odes from the *Mistress*. Reggio dedicated his opus to the King, and in his preface lauded John Jenkins, who set portions of Benlowes' *Theophila*. Shadwell and Flatman wrote encomia.

⁸⁹ Nethercot, *op cit*, pp. 280 ff.

⁹⁰ Dr. Johnson made the point with classic bluntness: "It is urged that the irregularity of numbers is the very thing which makes that kind of poetry fit for all manner of subjects. But he [Cowley] should have remembered that which is fit for everything can fit nothing well." *Lives of the Poets*, I, 59.

that "it would tend to convince even the most incredulous that if a thing is worth doing at all it is worth doing badly."⁹¹ The immediate followers of Cowley afford research material aplenty. Yet one cannot believe that the history of the Pindarick is darker than that of the "ballad" or the "sonnet," though the reputation of neither was clouded by service rendered on royal birthdays.

Several enthusiastic disciples of Cowley outlined a theory of Pindarick verse and endeavored to put it into practice.⁹² Thomas Sprat, bishop of Rochester, must have been a delightful man, but in hyperbole he out-Cowleyed Cowley. Of his master he wrote:

Thy high Pindaricks soar
So high, where never any wing till now could get;
And yet thy wit
Doth seem so great, as those that do fly lower.
Thou stand'st on Pindar's back;
And therefore thou a higher flight dost take:
Only thou art the eagle, he the wren,
Thou hast brought him from the dust
And made him live⁹³

Bishop Sprat admired particularly Cowley's learning (which was very considerable), moral earnestness, and "way of writing." He was a genuinely humble and loyal follower. Yet these good things could not keep "The Plague of Athens" from being an expansive pseudo-gothic structure which, like Dr. Johnson's net, revealed interstices between the intersections.⁹⁴ Still the poem is interesting for reasons which indi-

⁹¹ "Parnassus and the Midden," by Michael T. Pope, *New Witness* (London), Vol. XIV, No. 339.

⁹² The principal contributor was Sprat, whose "Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. Abraham Cowley" was prefixed to the 1668 edition of Cowley's works. Criticism of Cowley also set in very early. Note, e.g., "On the ingenious Poet Mr. Cowley. A Pyndarique Ode," in *Naps upon Parnassus*, E2.

If that my muse would honour him with a Song,
It must first learn to chat in th' Hebrew tongue.

⁹³ Chalmers, IX, 328.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, IX, p. 320. Cowley is upon occasion a venturesome rhymers, but Sprat's

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cate what the charms of the Pindarick were felt to be in Sprat's time: it is a parade of learning, reviewing in particular a considerable amount of mythology; the poem is quite neatly divided into paragraph topics; and the illustrations are often drawn from sources suggesting naturalism, as:

The belly felt at last its share,
And all the subtile labyrinths there
Of winding bowels did new monsters bear.

Thomas Flatman, the fourth and most complete edition of whose *Poems and Songs* appeared in 1686,⁹⁷ lacked almost everything that would have insured a successful quest of the "Temeretic" of phrase which Cowley had recommended. Accordingly his Pindaricks, of which "The Review" is doubtless the best, have the quality which the author's name unfortunately suggests. But he introduced nuances of form, and a kind of pastoral softness which occasionally summons to mind the Romantic poets. "The Review," for example, closes one stanza with these lines:

Piteous ruins on the shore,
And on the naked beach Leander lay.

There are echoes, if nothing more, of Miltonic diction in "On the Death of the Right Honourable Thomas Earl of Orery";⁹⁸ and "On the Death of the Illustrious Prince Rupert" might almost have been written by Cowley. "The Retirement," on the other hand, expresses a mood to which the same Cowley may have aspired but to which he never attained:

I list'ned heedfully around,
But not a whisper there was found.
The murmuring brook hard by

"wildness" in this domain is remarkable. He couples "carcasses" with "Acropolis," "child" with "kill'd," "life" and "grief"

⁹⁷ Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, III, 277-422

⁹⁸ This poem is also interesting for its intricate rhyme schemes, characteristic of Flatman. He was an able craftsman.

As heavy, and as dull as I,
Seem'd drowsily along to creep;
It ran with undiscover'd pace,
And if a pebble stopp'd the lazy race,
'Twas but as if it started in its sleep.
To any piteous moan,
Wont to groan with them that groan,
Eccho herself was speechless here.
Thrice did I sigh, thrice miserably cry,
Al me! the Nymph, ai me! would not reply,
Or churlish, or she was asleep for company.

Flatman is most interesting, however, for what he has to say concerning the making of verse, especially in the Preface to his fourth edition.⁹⁷

The Pindarick form, he indicates, appealed especially to all those who felt that writing *billets-doux* to "painted mistresses" was a deplorable practice and who nursed in their bosoms the ancient English passion for moral ends and religious meditation.⁹⁸ It was, however, a Royalist rather than a Puritan medium, though the men who turned to it contrasted strongly enough with the general atmosphere of the Restoration. It seems indubitable that the appeal of Cowley to Flatman and Sprat must be attributed in large part to the fact that his Muse "soared" thematically rather than prosodically.⁹⁹ And it is worthy of note that from the outset

⁹⁷ Saintsbury, *Caroline Poets*, pp. 284-85. He characterizes admirably several types of poetaster—the "melancholy madrigal writer," and the wit who incorporates his friends' *bons mots* in his verse. Apparently there was some disposition to "wake up and live" in this era, for Flatman says "Some there are that Beseech, Others that Hector their Muses. Some that Diet their Pegasus, give him his Heats and Ayrings for the Course, Others that endeavour to stop up his broken wind with Medicinal Ale and Bisquet."

⁹⁸ Note Denham's praise in "On Mr. Abraham Cowley's Death" (Chalmers, VII, 247).

On a stiff gale (as Flaccus sings)
The Theban swan extends his wings,
When through th' ethereal clouds he flies:
To the same pitch our swan does rise

⁹⁹ Eulogistic Pindaricks welcomed Charles on his return (*vide infra*, p. 123). Other early examples include *A Pindarique to Their Sacred Majesties, James II and His Royal Consort Queen Mary, on Their Joynt Coronations at Westminster*,

the Pindarick form was used sparingly for topics akin to those which its Greek originator had favored, and lavishly for celebrating the moral, religious, and elegiac themes affected by Cowley. Also consonant with his practice is the fact that more than half of seventeenth-century Pindarick is biographical or autobiographical. It was not until later that, under the aegis of dull Hanoverian sovereigns, the form was identified with glorifications of royal feats and feasts.

Finally there was Flatman's friend, "the matchless Orinda," Katherine Philips, whose verses were issued in a handsome folio during 1678.¹⁰⁰ She essayed nearly all the forms and measures, not infrequently with some success. But her one Pindarick—"Upon Mr. Abraham Cowley's Retirement"—is just amiable metrical dogtrotting, notable primarily because the poet responded in due time with an ode to her memory. Mrs. Philips is, the critic need scarcely add, one of numerous "learned" and "Platonic" ladies who embellish the history of the English ode. The influence of the salon, due in part perhaps to the leadership of Henrietta Maria, has been carefully described.¹⁰¹ Fewer historians appear to have observed what from the present point of view is at least equally important—the association of men and women in the practice of the spiritual life and its literary exposition. Fénélon and Madame Guyon are not isolated but very representative figures; and in the years of her tribulation, Henrietta Maria was almost a symbol of England's religious womanhood. But a symbol only. Anglican and Puritan,

April 23, 1685, by John Wilson (London, 1685), and *A Pindarick Poem on the Royal Navy, Most Humbly Dedicated to Their August Majesties, K William and Q Mary*, by Thomas D'Urfey (London, 1691) Both are valueless

¹⁰⁰ *Poems by the Most Deservedly Admired Mrs Katherine Philips, the Matchless Orinda* (London, 1678)

¹⁰¹ See *The Salon and English Letters*, by Chauncey Brewster Tinker (New York, 1915), especially pp 85 ff, and *The Learned Lady in England, 1650-1760*, by Myra Reynolds (Boston, 1920) Lists of the feminine poets, with illustrations of their work, are afforded in *Specimens of British Poetesses*, edited by Alexander Dyce (London, 1825) See also the list in *Letters Written by Eminent Persons*, Vol II, Part I, p. 123.

Catholic and dissenter alike, could point to the learned and pious lady. One of the first feminine writers of religious verse in the century was Elizabeth Grymeston, said to have written "seven odes in imitation of the penitential psalms."¹⁰² It is probable enough that "metaphysical" verse reflects the Platonic companionship which its authors favored.¹⁰³ The ideal to which they all aspired was no bloodless creature but the woman whom Crashaw's "Wishes" portrays. However short of that the "female poets" may have fallen, write they did and particularly in the vein of hymn or ode.¹⁰⁴

It is difficult to account for the fact that so little of the magnificent poetic vitality which has formed the subject mat-

¹⁰² Hunter, *Chorus Vatum Anglicanorum*, Vol. I, Part I, fol. 125. Her book, *Miscellanea, Meditations, etc.*, was published in London during 1604. I have not seen it.

¹⁰³ See also Crashaw's feminine correspondents.

¹⁰⁴ A few remarks on poets not discussed in the text may conclude the chapter. Though Lord Herbert of Cherbury employed Jonsonian stanzas for poems not labeled odes, it is his Horatian "Ode upon a Question Moved, Whether Love Should Continue for ever?" (*The Poems of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, edited by J. C. Collins, p. 92) which remains his most original and significant lyric. No time need be wasted on the ultra-minor, whose primary function it must be to expand the footnotes in volumes such as this. A few titles may be named at random: *Pierides, or the Muses Mount*, by Hugh Crompton (London, 1658), bald, flat, and sometimes Horatian; *Festum Voluptatis*, by Samuel Pick (London, 1639), not uninteresting, but decidedly minor, and *Amorea, the Lost Lover* (London, 1661), a miscellany the author of which may be accused of unsuccessful collusion with all Nine Muses.

The case of Herrick (see *The Hesperides and Noble Numbers*, edited by A. W. Pollard, London, n. d.) is more complex. Every variety of shorter classical verse is to be found in the *Hesperides*, but oddly enough (in view of Herrick's reputation) the influence of Horace is very slight, and one is led to assume that the poet was thinking primarily of the Greeks, of Catullus, and of Joannes Secundus. Obviously such poems as the Sir Clipseby Crew ode are Anacreontics, and in general one may say that no other English poet wrote Anacreontics with a comparable distinction and charm. Accordingly Herrick's time-honored fame as the "English Horace" seems undeserved. Horace is not light and sentimental as Herrick is, being considerably more of a literary man and (if you insist) a snob. It is possible to think of Joannes Secundus writing

Then, then methinks, how sweetly flows

That liquefaction of her clothes,

but if such varieties of amiable doting are to be found in Horace I have missed them. Herrick was always ready to quaff a round of "lyric wine" to the Roman (in the "Ode to Sir Clipseby Crew"), but in all probability the guest would have retired from the party at an early hour.

ter of this chapter should have stirred the enthusiasm of several subsequent generations. Religious history doubtless affords a part of the explanation. Charles II and James II undermined not only the Stuart House, but also the religious and artistic heritage of pre-Cromwellian England. Even so the especial disciplines of the middle seventeenth century—study and imitation of the Greek poets; concern with religious meditation and Platonic speculation—cut a wider swathe on the English poetic intellect than would at first appear. Temporarily all that remained of much experimentation in the architectonic principles of verse writing might be Cowley's Pindarick; ¹⁰⁵ but the work had been done, and a later time would return to it anew. Meanwhile, we shall be concerned with the poets of the Restoration.

¹⁰⁵ The inscription of Cowley's tomb in Westminster Abbey proudly terms him "Anglorum Pindarus." On the general subject of Cowley's fame, see *Abraham Cowley's Reputation in England*, by Jean Loiseau (Paris, 1931), and "The Reputation of Abraham Cowley (1660-1800)," by Arthur H. Nethercot, *PMLA*, XXXVIII, 588-641.

CHAPTER FIVE: *John Dryden and the Restoration*

WHEN Charles II returned in 1660, he was welcomed with, among other things, Pindarick odes. These varied in quality all the way from Cowley's solid and meditative poem to the weak, rather grimy effusion ¹ of the aging James Shirley. Dryden, however, wrote his eulogy ² in heroic couplets, thus indicating the importance of the Roman discipline. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that these simple facts suffice to indicate the difficulties which confront the historian of the English ode who studies the Restoration period as a prelude to the literary development of the eighteenth century. An old order was dying slowly and majestically—Milton lived until 1674—but the new order which would take its place was likewise being born in long-drawn-out travail, and would reveal when it did arrive not a few ancestral traits. Here the problem will be somewhat arbitrarily simplified by taking into the purview of this chapter the events of Dryden's whole lifetime, while reserving for later consideration some phenomena which fall into better position there.

¹ "An Ode upon the Happy Return of King Charles II to His Languishing Nations," by James Shirley, text in *A Little Ark Containing Sundry Pieces of Seventeenth-Century Verse*, edited by G. Thorn-Drury (London, 1921), p. 19. This ode is divided into two parts, one addressed "To the King," another "To the People." The last line of each stanza of "To the King" is a laborious seven-footer.

² "Astrea Redux." See *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, Globe edition (London, 1911). Worthy of note is the resemblance of Dryden's first line,

Now with a gen'ral peace the world was blest,
to the initial line of Cowley's "Upon His Majesties Restoration and Return,"
Now Blessings on you all, ye peaceful Stars

One can hardly make oneself clear at this point without venturing some little way into the history of ideas and literary taste, however perilous and personal the excursion must inevitably be. The return of the Court from France naturally brought with it a vogueish interest in French culture, as well as some concern with the religious and philosophic outlook of France. These influences have been carefully evaluated by a number of scholars, the most recent of whom include Bredvold³ and Clark.⁴ Their researches do not, of course, imply that during this period English poetry simply went French or "classical." But trends long since evident in England were reinforced by the support they received from Gallic example. Thus naturalism,⁵ of which hardly a major or minor writer after Jonson's time was free,⁶ came into its own in drama once the ban on the theatre was lifted. The principal formal characteristics of Restoration verse—for example, the couplet and the epigram—had been cultivated by English writers on the basis of Roman practice long before the King returned. Added prestige was now attached to them.

In the realm of ideas there was undoubtedly a marked infiltration of French, more specifically Cartesian,⁷ points of view. Nevertheless one needs to bear in mind that Descartes came into a world well prepared to receive him. The primary intellectual need of the period was for a new and satisfying definition of the reason. To Aquinas and the Schools in the noontime of medieval life, the intellect had seemed shutter and

³ *The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden*, by Louis I Bredvold (Ann Arbor, 1934).

⁴ *Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England (1660-1800)*, by A F B Clark (Paris, 1925)

⁵ The word is used here in the premodern sense, as defining a tendency to see and portray man as conditioned by his life in the world of nature, and as a consequence to stress homelier, sometimes relatively gross, aspects of his experience.

⁶ Examples have been given. In addition note the appearance of naturalistic passages in the "metaphysical" poets, notably Vaughan. This cannot be accounted for merely on the basis of a common dependence upon Donne.

⁷ See *The Role of Descartes in Seventeenth Century England*, by Sterling P. Lamprecht (New York, 1935)

lens alike. It was both a mirroring and a creative faculty. But in late Scholasticism the exercise of that faculty had been so highly formalized and constricted that it was hardly more than a psychical something that went through a routine manual of dialectical arms. The masterly grip in which Aquinas held the synthesis of creative insight and obedient reception was relaxed at the very time when the free exploration of nature and history seemed to provide material which the minds of the orthodox in religion or philosophy or both could not easily fit into their systems.⁸ Accordingly the two functions of the reason were more and more estranged. One and the same English century witnessed a revival of Platonism and the spread of the Baconian gospel. But what is the Cartesian system other than an attempt to sunder Platonism and empiricism and then glue them together again? In England the really important circumstance was doubtless that the events of daily life, not to mention the popularity of such books as Hobbes' *Leviathan*, seemed to render the reconciliation of "science" and "faith" more and more improbable. "Creative insight" was largely taken to mean the discovery of the Divinity manifest to reason, while "obedient reception" was applied to life and nature as they appeared to be. This distinction was (I think) seldom made sharply and systematically in England. What happened eventually was that Berkeley identified "insight" with pure idealism, while Hume reduced the intellect to a sequence of self-operative material phenomena. But for the moment the experience of increasing numbers of simpler folk was the principal thing: many were unsettled, and others severed "reason" from "faith" whenever it suited them to do so. An era of religious belief and rationalism was forever unable to make up its mind which it wanted to be. One may add that attitudes towards government changed similarly. England had now

⁸ See particularly *Les Degrés du savoir*, by Jacques Maritain (Paris, 1930). The present writer's views on the subject are set forth in *The Eternal Magnet a History of Philosophy*, by Siegfried Behn and George N. Shuster (New York, 1929), pp. 172-95.

taken cognizance of the nonmonarchical state; and the aura which had once been associated with the Crown was gone forever. Henceforth a government would be judged more or less realistically on its merits, though a nostalgic longing for something else would abide.

Quite naturally the poetic instrument of the ode, as designed by such writers as Milton, Cowley, and Crashaw, could be made to serve the uses of realistic and rationalistic poets only with extreme difficulty. It is a curious fact that the spiritual substance of the Greek ode, which was resigned awe in the presence of willful but august natural forces identified with the Divine, evaporated more quickly in England than did the spirit of the Hebrew Psalms. For these last, being associable with a still powerful ecclesiastical institution to which it was pleasant and often profitable to belong, could be paraphrased with varying degrees of unctuousness by enlightened people for whom David's God was hardly more than a benevolent old inventor who now and then distractedly oiled the wheels of his machine. At any rate, an increasing number of poets now used the Pindarick as a vehicle for satire or bombastic eulogy. Yet there were also those who continued to look upon it as a vehicle for impassioned, even religious feeling.

It was Dryden who kept the great tradition alive. But by way of a prelude to his achievement we shall review a number of phenomena which set that achievement in perspective. Charles Cotton⁹ played in his time a role akin to that of Thomas Stanley in earlier decades. As a translator and interpreter of French authors, Scarron¹⁰ and Montaigne primarily, he affected the literary development of the period to an extent quite out of keeping with the value of his original work.¹¹ This is, however, often pleasing, though its deficiency

⁹ *The Poems of Charles Cotton*, edited by John Beresford (London, 1932) The critical introduction is the most satisfactory essay on Cotton

¹⁰ "Scarron in England," by S E Leavitt (unpublished dissertation, Harvard, 1917).

¹¹ Cotton's other services to French literature include his version of Marigny's ode to winter, praised by Wordsworth

in regularity offended the eighteenth century, as witness the rather surprising fact that Dr. Johnson ignored Cotton. Being a disciple of Anacreon, Cotton wrote very good drinking songs, which echo praise of good Falernian rather than medieval England's under-the-table hymnody. Elsewhere, especially in the Coelia odes, he is what used to be called a "poet of fancy."¹² He is a vigorous though terrestrial-minded lover, a connoisseur of nature and something of a philosopher. Were he capable of mordancy, he would almost be Prior's double.

Cotton's Pindaricks are of some historical interest because "Hope" and "Melancholy" are links in the Miltonic tradition¹³ and a little more besides. Though autobiographical in a leisurely and not always convincing fashion, these poems have an unmistakable Caroline felicity of phrase.¹⁴ Cotton is irregular, but not glaringly so; and he is enough of a traditionalist to cling to Milton's final Alexandrine. It may also be that he was a kind of link between the ruggedness of Cowley¹⁵ and the smoothness of Dryden. More notable, however, is the fact that his Pindaricks break down the wall between "enthusiasm" and satire, as witness these lines from "Hope":

Yet once, I must confess, I was
Such an overweening ass,
As in fortune's worst distress
To believe thy promises¹⁶

¹² For example, "Ode," in *Poems*, p. 360

¹³ Suggested doubtless by "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso," though having little in common with either. Both Miltonic poems were considered odes by many writers of the eighteenth century, so that it may be well to note here that they are, of course, modeled on the *canzone* and observe the conventions of that form.

¹⁴ This shows to best advantage in Cotton's songs, which usually differ from his Horatian odes by reason of the use made of the "four-three" meter.

¹⁵ It is of interest that Cotton's Pindarick "Beauty," written "in answer to an Ode of Mr. Abraham Cowley's upon the same subject," is an irregular *riposte* to one of Cowley's regular *Mistress* odes.

¹⁶ The following stanza from "Poverty," another Cotton Pindarick, is close to Butler:

This puzzles quite the Aesculapian tribe
Who, where there are no fees, can have no wit
And makes them helpless med'cines still provide,

Cotton likewise continues the Jonsonian tradition of odes written in regular stanzas of irregular formation.¹⁷ He seems also to have been influenced by the odes of Joannes Secundus.¹⁸

Some years would pass, however, before the Pindarick form came to be the vehicle of satire. Thus John Oldham, whose diatribes in heroic couplets are not without their meed of coarse, obscene power, wrote Pindaricks which set a record for tinniness and bathos that later eras would hardly rival.¹⁹ He paraphrased both Horace²⁰ and Saint Ambrose²¹ in long, wobbly irregular stanzas; he wrote what is probably the worst autobiographical ode in the language; and he said of his Muse that

Cool Reason's dictates me no more can move
Than men in Drink, in Bedlam or in Love²²

Both for the sick, and poor alike unfit
For inward griefs all that they do prepare
Nothing but crumbs, and fragments are,
And outwardly apply no more
But sordid rags unto the sore
Thus Poverty is dressed, and dose't
With little art, and little cost,
As if poor rem'dies for the poor were fit
When Poverty in such a place doth sit,
That 'tis the grand Projection only that must conquer it

¹⁷ One of these, "Her Hair," suggests the form Landor would choose for his odes, though its amiable sensualism has nothing in common with *Pericles and Aspasia*. This stanza is good

Sure she is Heaven itself, and I
In fervent zeal,
This lock did steal,
And each life-giving thread,
Snatch'd from her beamy head,
As once Prometheus from the sky

¹⁸ Chalmers, VI, 765. The ode is Horatian

¹⁹ *The Works of Mr John Oldham, together with His Remains* (London, 1686), "Poems and Translations," pp. 59 ff.

²⁰ Horace, Book II, Ode XIV. This effusion is in four stanzas.

²¹ "Paraphrase upon the Hymn of St Ambrose Ode."

²² From "A Letter from the Country to a Friend in Town, giving an Account of the Author's Inclinations to Poetry." Oldham has a good many cognate expressions. Thus in "To the Memory of Mr Charles Morwent" he exclaims

O that I could distil my vital Juice in Tears!

One of Oldham's Pindaricks is, however, interesting for non-prosodical reasons. In "Upon the Works of Ben Jonson Ode" there is heard the note of complaint which many sounded as a warning against the short-lived triumph of Messieurs Boileau and Rapin over the English mind: Jonson is praised for his resolution to use

No French Commodity which now so much does take,
And our own better Manufacture spoil.

~ It was Samuel Butler who—though he may well have had obscure predecessors—illustrated most successfully that Cowley's invention could serve the uses of the writer of satire and burlesque. Butler's *Genuine Remains*, not published until 1759, contains several fierce satirical odes. "Upon a Hypocritical Nonconformist"²³ has not a few good couplets, for instance,

The subtle spider never spins
But on dark days, his slimy gins.

Metrically, however, the poem is merely a variant of the Hudibrastic measure, which gains in effectiveness by being hammered out in roughly even couplets, though classical practice during years to follow might sharpen the edges excessively. More interesting is "To the Happy Memory of the Most Renowned Du-Val," which may be said to have inaugurated the genre of mingled chaffing and moralizing in Pindarick form which is now so integral a part of our literary heritage.²⁴ Du-Val was a highwayman, hanged at Tyburn, and "very popular with the female sex." Butler was not quite subtle and light-hearted enough to carry it off, but the gist of the thing is here:

Taught the wild Arabs on the road
To act in a more genteel mode;
Take prizes more obligingly than those
Who never had been bred *filous*

²³ *The Poetical Works of Samuel Butler*, edited by George Gilfillan (New York, 1858), p. 180

²⁴ This ode has, to be sure, an underlying satirical intention.

And how to hang in a more graceful fashion,
Than e'er was known before to the dull English nation.

The manner in which the Pindarick became an instrument of satire—and often of very coarse satire, indeed—may likewise be seen in that partly ribald *Collection of Poems relating to State Affairs*²⁵ which enjoyed a very considerable popularity under different titles after 1689. Here are published well-known Pindaricks by Cowley and Sprat. The stanza appears in at least a dozen places, some of the poems bearing Pindarick labels.²⁶ Similar publications reveal a comparable trend.²⁷ But the future would show that the Pindarick form, though admirably adapted to amiable jesting, is not the proper vial in which to store sardonic venom. Amiable satirists like Praed, for example, could do wonders with it; ²⁸ but the long irregular stanzas dull the edge of the couplet, which has always been, and doubtless will always be, the literary stiletto.

A parallel phenomenon to the gradual triumph of the skeptical, satirical reason was the change in the position of woman under the Restoration. Following after years of dour Puritanical decorum, Charles's open immorality and the employment of actresses in the theater turned not a few feminine heads. The religious poetess of yore survived, indeed, as witness the triumphs of Elizabeth Rowe. But the "New Woman" of wit and obliging disposition reached a kind of apogee in Aphra Behn. She must have been a personable, if reckless, lady; but whatever may be said in favor of her plays, the "Incomparable Astrea" was no master of Cowley's unbroken Pegasus. She can, indeed, be said to have come a cropper every time she

²⁵ *A New Collection of Poems relating to State Affairs* by the Greatest Wits of the Age (London, 1705) This is the "spurious edition." The 1689 edition was called *A Collection of Poems on Affairs of State*

²⁶ "On Oliver's Peace with the Dutch," by Mathew Mew, *ibid*, p. 169

²⁷ See *Musarum Deliciae* (London, 1656) A good bibliography of English political songs and satires of this period is given, with some comment, in the *Retrospective Review*, II, 48 ff

²⁸ *Vide infra*, p. 177.

mounted.²⁹ To be sure, there are passages of interest to the historian, notably one in "A Pindaric Poem to the Reverend Doctor Burnet, on the Honour He Did Me of Enquiring after Me and My Muse":³⁰

Till now my careless Muse no higher strove
T'enlarge her Glory, and extend her Wings;
Than underneath Parnassus Grove
To sing of Shepherds and their humble Love;
But never durst, like Cowly, tune her Strings,
To sing of Heroes and of Kings.³¹

Less sensational but not less significant as a straw in the wind was that remote ancestor of feminism, Lady Mary Chudleigh.³² A seventeenth-century Peregrine Pickle, she was constrained by religion and gentility to retire from a difficult husband to the delights of literature and feminine friendships. "Marissa" generally appears, says Professor Fairchild,³³ "as a stoical, epicurean, sentimental Platonist." She was always more than a bit of a fool, but she knew enough classical literature to write straightforwardly, and had sufficient philosophy to be in a measure representative of her time. Lady Mary's Pindarick verse, while prevailingly vapid and sweetish, is better than that of either Katherine Philips or Aphra Behn. "To Amystrea" is a fair sample, but the "Song of the Three Children Paraphrased" is of some slight measure of im-

²⁹ In the course of her comment in *Six Brilliant Women* (London, 1930), "Aphra Behn," p. 84, V Sackville-West refers to Mrs Behn's "turgid Pindarics" I have found little other comment

³⁰ *Works*, p. 407

³¹ Mrs Behn also wrote eulogistic Pindaricks *A Pindarick on the Death of Our late Sovereign with an Ancient Prophecy on His Present Majesty* (London, 1685), and *A Pindarick Poem on the Happy Coronation of His Most Sacred Majesty James II and His Illustrious Consort Queen Mary* (London, 1685). These are not reprinted by Summers Thorn-Drury, *op. cit.*, gives a Pindarick written in memory of Mrs Behn

³² *Poems on Several Occasions*, by Lady Mary Chudleigh (London, 1722)

³³ *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, by Hoxie Neale Fairchild (New York, 1939), I, 242

portance as one of a long chain of Pindaric paraphrases of Biblical hymns.

The noble families of Great Britain produced still other poetesses. Education, which did not assure women a systematic training for the intellectual life, did inculcate respect for the twin arts of poetry and music.³⁴ Though Ann, Countess of Winchilsea, was writing at the turn of the century and belongs in many ways to the age which followed Dryden, she was all the same a product of the seventeenth century and one of its most interesting minor poets.³⁵ No early Pindarick has quite the quality of "The Spleen," which is sensible, realistic, and literate in the best sense of the term. Her "All Is Vanity" may carry too heavy a burden of didactic sentiment, but it proves that "Ardelia" had powers of observation not unlike those which guarantee the fame of Jane Austen. And "A Pindarick Poem upon the Hurricane in November, 1703" is at least a prosodic novelty, being accompanied with a hymn. The Countess is rich in testimony to the especial appeal which Cowley's verse made to intelligent women of that time, whose cult of Platonism seems to have been less hazardous mentally than might appear.³⁶

Meanwhile the Court of Charles II had written its own name in the history of the arts. The King, blending lust and levity as English monarchs have seldom done, enjoyed his fill of music and amorous song. Sometimes more sedate observers were shocked. Evelyn wrote,³⁷ for example: "I can never for-

³⁴ "Besides verse and plays there were but few other books to amuse their leisure. But they carried music, especially in the sense of singing to stringed instruments, to a high perfection, the art was encouraged by the fashionable habit of writing masques, verses and love songs, and the extraordinary power of writing them well, which was then so profusely spread among a generation of unpretentious and unprofessional poets." *England under the Stuarts*, by George M. Trevelyan (16th edition, London, 1933).

³⁵ *The Poems of Ann Countess of Winchilsea*, edited by Myra Reynolds (Chicago, 1903).

³⁶ *Essays Modern and Elizabethan*, by Edward Dowden (London, n d), pp. 234-49.

³⁷ *Diary of John Evelyn*, 4th of February, 1684-85.

get the inexpressible luxury and profaneness, gaming, and all dissoluteness, and as it were total forgetfulness of God (it being Sunday evening) which this day se'nnight I was witness of, the King sitting and toying with his concubines . . . a French boy singing love songs, in that glorious gallery." Veteran composers like Edward Coleman,³⁸ whose wife was the first woman to appear on an English stage, found employment and a measure of affluence. The songs can be gauged satisfactorily by reading *Wit and Mirth*,³⁹ a fulsome and spotty collection edited by Thomas Durfey, the courtier poet. Far more significant, however, was the "new music" provided by Purcell, Blow, and others. Whether the impetus was given by Charles, fond of Italian arias,⁴⁰ or whether it came from the musicians themselves, eagerly following the invitation to progress, the monophonic and polyphonic styles were out of favor. The performance of the first English opera in 1656 was the symbol of well-nigh universal change in the methods of the composer's art.⁴¹

True enough, Purcell still wrote a good deal of music in the older styles, but apparently looked upon most of it as somewhat beneath his dignity.⁴² The selections in *Orpheus Britannicus* (1698)⁴³ reflect, of course, the preferences of Purcell's

³⁸ Some account of Coleman is afforded by Beresford, *op cit.*, p. 300

³⁹ *Wit and Mirth or Pills to Purge Melancholy, Being a Collection of the Best Merry Ballads and Songs, Old and New*, by Thomas Durfey (London, 1719) The first volumes of the first edition bore another title.

⁴⁰ Hawkins, *op cit.*, II, 753

⁴¹ *The Commonwealth and Restoration Stage*, by Leslie Hotson (Cambridge, Mass., 1928), pp 151-55

⁴² "Henry Purcell's Dramatic Songs and the English Broadside Ballad," by R. Lamson, Jr., *PMLA*, LIII, 148-62 Lamson quotes a letter from W. H. N. Harding anent the theory that "composers of the period felt far from flattered when their compositions were used for the tunes of street ballads"

⁴³ *A Collection of All the Choicest Songs for One Two and Three Part Voices Orpheus Britannicus Compos'd by Mr Henry Purcell* (London, 1706, 1711). This was the second, enlarged edition of the 1698 work, and the later supplement. Part One contains three odes so designated Dryden's "On the Death of Mr. Henry Purcell," set by Dr. John Blow, "Another Ode on the same occasion by Persons of Quality", and "An Ode for the Consort at York-buildings, upon the Death of Purcell" This may serve to indicate how closely music and ode had been associated.

friends; but we may doubtless assume that the book illustrates the feeling of contemporary critics, appreciative of what was new. Henceforth it would become increasingly difficult to mate verse and music. The lyric would eventually reach new heights of fastidious excellence; and the composer, for his part, would demand librettos adapted to his use. How then could the estrangement of poetry from music be avoided? Two events which occurred late in the century reveal the thought expended upon answering this query. The odes in honor of St. Cecilia's Day, performed under the auspices of the London Musical Society each year from 1683 to 1710, were (with the exception of Dryden's two offerings) notably bad.⁴⁴ The accompanying music was, however, usually very good. Purcell himself set the initial ode, written by C. Fishburn.⁴⁵ Still more open to criticism were the Pindarick birthday odes which began to appear annually after 1689, when Thomas Shadwell inaugurated the practice.⁴⁶ The birthday ode as such was by this time an established institution. Cartwright, for example, was the begetter of numerous birthday odes clad in Jonsonian stanzas.⁴⁷

✓ This, then, was the milieu into which John Dryden came, and he was not a man born out of due time. The verse forms developed by the innovators of the century were his to employ; but the kind of perfection to which he brought each and all of them was a triumph of genius attentive to what his imme-

⁴⁴ See *An Account of the Musical Celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day*, by Henry Husk (London, 1857)

⁴⁵ *A Musical Entertainment Perform'd on November XXII, 1683 It Being the Festival of St. Cecilia, a Great Patroness of Music, Whose Memory Is Annually Honour'd by a Public Feast Made on That Day by the Masters and Lovers of Music as Well in England as in Foreign Parts* (London, 1683) The poem illustrates difficulties experienced in writing a suitable libretto

Welcom, welcom, to all the Pleasures that delight,
Of every sense, the grateful Appetite
Hail, great Assembly of Apollo's Race,
Hail to this happy Place,
This Musical Assembly,
That seems to be

The Ark of Universal Harmony

⁴⁶ Gosse, *English Odes*, Introduction, p. xvi.

⁴⁷ Chalmers, VI, 533 ff

diate predecessors (excepting Milton) had generally ignored—the values of art, understood as a judicious proportioning of means to the end desired. It was from this point of view that he discussed the Pindarick in that Preface to *Sylvae* which still remains the most valuable critique of Cowley ever written.⁴⁸ Dryden placed his finger on the source of the trouble—Cowley's deficiency in "sweetness of numbers"; but he also recognized his predecessor's great gifts of "imagination" and "warmth." Then he went on to say: "Since Pindar was the prince of lyric poets, let me have leave to say that, in imitating him, our numbers should, for the most part, be lyrical; for variety, or rather where the majesty of the thought requires it, they may be stretched to the English heroic of five feet or to the French Alexandrine of six. But the ear must preside . . . the cadence of one line must be a rule to that of the next; and the sound of the former must slide gently into that which follows, without leaping from one extreme into another. It must be done like the shadowings of a picture, which fall by degrees into darker colour."

One may, if one wishes, see here the influence of French thinking and in particular of Boileau.⁴⁹ These did leave their imprint upon Dryden. The notion that the English genius was Roman, then widely entertained in France, naturally had its effect on the estimate which London writers made of themselves.⁵⁰ Latin verse and paraphrases of the Latin poets of the classical period were considered substantial bids for fame. Yet it is interesting to observe that in discussing the Pindarick form Dryden does not praise the "beau désordre" upon which Boileau had laid so fateful a stress.⁵¹ The rules he lays down are age-old Horatian counsels; and the spirit which informs

⁴⁸ Written in 1685. See *Essays of John Dryden*, edited by W. P. Ker (Oxford, 1900), I, 266-69.

⁴⁹ See *The Reciprocal Influence of French and English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, by H. T. W. Wood (London, 1870), pp. 9-24.

⁵⁰ See Johnson, *Lives of the Poets*, III, 107.

⁵¹ *Œuvres poétiques de Boileau* (Paris, 1868), pp. 270-72. The "beau désordre" passage is, of course, in *L'Art poétique*.

them is classical in the best sense.⁵² Dryden saw that what his predecessor had really borrowed from Pindar was audacious and brilliant imagery, and that the imitators had failed because such imagery was beyond their reach. Manifestly these views are closer to reality and to the real character of poetic inspiration than is Congreve's essay of twenty-two years later,⁵³ which sought to overcome the array of "disproportioned, uncertain, and perplexed verses and rhymes" mustered by the Pindaric writers with the weapon of the true Pindaric form, characterized by recurring strophes, antistrophes, and epodes. Discipline was necessary, even though Dryden's successors were to make it a veritable science of martinets. The vigor of the baroque might have been grafted on a symmetrical classical tree—had the English Court that succeeded to the Stuart heritage possessed a modicum of taste and splendor, and not been just a fashionable setting for lumpish bourgeois sovereigns.

✓ Dryden's first Pindarick, the "Threnodia Augustalis,"⁵⁴ is in the biographical tradition. Eighteen rhyming stanzas of varied length and uneven structure, bristling with mythological allusions, nevertheless illustrate those virtues of clarity and condensation which Dryden brought to the task of reforming English verse. ✓ The poem is doubtless open to criticism for rhetoric, extravagant eulogy, bad rhymes,⁵⁵ and other faults. It lacks the "wit" and most of the picturesqueness of Cowley. Yet there is in it something no other poet of the time could

⁵² Ker, *op cit.*, I, 186. From "The Author's Apology for Heroic Poetry and Poetic License" (1697).

⁵³ Text in Chalmers, X, 300-301

⁵⁴ *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, Globe edition (London, 1911), p. 205. The poem dates from 1685.

⁵⁵ For example, "Prayers" is made to rhyme with "petitioners." The following lines suggest almost any bad poet of the period.

Well, for so great a trust he chose
A prince who never disobey'd
Not when the most severe commands were laid,
Nor want, not exile, with his duty weigh'd:
A prince on whom, if Heaven its eyes could close,
The welfare of the world it safely might repose.

convey—the indefinable essence of prosodic distinction. The value of a century of experiment in writing elaborate lyric verse can almost be symbolized by the fact that Dryden closes his final stanza with a three-stress line:

And, with a willing hand, restores
The fasces of the main.

That ending is far removed from the sonorous Alexandrines of Jonson and Milton (or is it a seven-footer in disguise?), but no one would deny it epigrammatic virtue or dictional effectiveness.

The "Threnodia" is likewise one of the first important "royal" Pindaricks. Eulogistic poems had, to be sure, come to play an important role in Stuart life. But the patterns of such tributes were normally Jonsonian.⁵⁶ Charles II was the first monarch to be feted with clusters of irregular stanzas. Dryden seems to have been following Cowley rather than the popular minor bards of his time, and this discipleship is still more evident in the magnificent Anne Killigrew threnody⁵⁷ which is (if one excepts "Lycidas") surely the finest biographical ode in the language. It is necessary only to read Cowley's "On the Death of Katherine Philips" to see how extensive Dryden's borrowings are. Mrs. Killigrew, a modest and minor poetess, furnished Dryden with the theme of ideal womanhood which served so important a purpose in seventeenth-century verse. The trend might be toward realism, the King and his concubines. Nevertheless the Spenserian conception of feminine beauty wedded to feminine goodness persisted to the end:

Thou hast no dross to purge from thy rich ore
Nor can thy soul a fairer mansion find
Than was the beauteous frame she left behind.

⁵⁶ Eulogy of personages not to be identified with royalty likewise employed Jonsonian stanzas. Note William Davenant's "In Remembrance of Master William Shakespeare" (Chalmers, VI, 432), and the introductory stanza notable primarily because it keeps the graceful Caroline rhythm.

⁵⁷ Dryden, *Works*, p. 368 "To the Pious Memory of the Accomplished Young Lady, Mrs. Anne Killigrew."

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Stanza 1, 4, and 10 are pure poetry. The others are direct panegyric managed with art and a measure of realism. It cannot be said that the poem is of equal quality throughout, stanza 3 in particular coming perilously close to Flatman; but beyond all question the faults merely serve to set in relief the great beauties of rhythm and diction. When one hears Dryden accused of "dullness"⁵⁸ one wonders if the critic could have read the first stanza of this ode, which echoes Cowley and Milton without a trace of abject discipleship and is in turn reechoed in our verse until well past the time of Francis Thompson.⁵⁹ Nothing could be more exact than Dryden's timing of short lines, or more adroit than his use of alliteration and transposed feet. It is the last stanza, however, which has most clearly left its mark. Here the structure is based upon almost rhetorical parallels, but the diction redeems it from all specious artifice, retaining a faint charm of archaic melodiousness but bravely essaying measures to which a new-found clarity gives a note of individuality.⁶⁰

The "Harmony Ode," originally called "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" and sung to music written by Giovanni Draghi, raises problems of a different kind. This is the first attempt by a major poet to write a libretto in the new cantata form—new, that is, in metrical drift and purpose, though retaining some affinity to the semi-liturgical poems which Crashaw and Cartwright had composed. Purcell, eager to devise symphonic accompaniments in the Italian manner, had written a number of "Royal Songs" which may be viewed as experiments in the medium.⁶¹ Basically the cantata form was supposed to pro-

⁵⁸ *Collected Essays, Papers, etc., of Robert Bridges* (London, 1932), No. 10, p. 274.

⁵⁹ Francis Thompson who was, whatever else one may or may not impute to him, a devotee of pure poetry, echoes every line of the first stanza. ✓

⁶⁰ The metrical tendency throughout the poem is toward regularity. Dryden's final stanza blends four- and five-stress lines. This practice resembles that of Milton in "Lycidas," which may or may not be a coincidence.

⁶¹ These odes are preserved in the British Museum *Autograph Collection of 62 Anthems, Welcome Songs, etc.* Purcell's *Autograph Score Book containing Several Anthems with Symphonies*. Several were written for James II.

vide a narrative or recitative, interrupted at intervals by solo voices carrying a simple aria, or by the chorus.⁶² In practice, however, little uniformity was achieved. Dryden, whose experience with composers of song music had not always been happy,⁶³ wrote the libretto in accordance with what appear to have been the conventions agreed upon. Brennecke's analysis⁶⁴ stresses the difficulties under which Draghi labored to set even this fairly agreeable text to music; and one can easily understand that Dryden, for his part, was no less sorely tried. Henceforth tribulation was destined to accompany all such efforts.

Ten years later, Dryden undertook to write a similar ode, the composer being Jeremiah Clarke.⁶⁵ This time (it would seem) the libretto was more carefully adapted to musical use; and it is certain, at any rate, that the lyric itself was very considerably better. Not a few critics have concurred in Dryden's judgment that "Alexander's Feast" was the best poem he had written; others have dissented, but the burden of proving the negative rests on every new reader. It is certain that not many composers have been given copy of such excellence, surpassing, as it does, for smoothness of texture, diversity of mood, and variousness of measure any libretto written in English since that time. Of interest are such prosodical facts as these: the disparity of the choruses in both length and rhythm; the introduction into an iambic poem of a trochaic passage that does not seem cacophonous; and the expression which fits the move-

⁶² See Grove, *Dictionary of Music*, "Cantata"

⁶³ Consult *The Songs of John Dryden*, edited by Cyrus Lawrence Day (Cambridge, Mass., 1932). This contains the text of Dryden's "Ode on the Death of Mr Henry Purcell," from *Orpheus Britannicus*. A note declares (p. 182) that Arthur Bedford attacked the ode as "blasphemous" in 1711. On Dryden's difficulties, see also *The Course of English Classicism*, by Sherard Vines (New York, 1930), p. 70.

⁶⁴ "Dryden's Odes and Draghi's Music," by Ernest Brennecke, Jr., *PMLA*, XIX, 1-36. The music is reprinted and analyzed.

⁶⁵ In *Pulver's Dictionary*, "Clarke, Jeremiah," it is asserted that British Museum MSS contain music written by Clarke for "Catchers, Odes, Songs, Etc." But his setting for "Alexander's Feast, or the Power of Music" has been lost.

ment of the verse to the theme. Nothing written in the same style during the eighteenth century is even remotely comparable. As set many years afterwards by Handel, "Alexander's Feast" ⁶⁶ is also a great musical work of art.⁶⁷

The date of the first cantata ode in England cannot as yet be determined precisely, though it falls somewhere in the two decades after 1670.⁶⁸ At first the choral parts were not explicitly marked in the libretto, as can be seen from Purcell's earlier odes in the form, which seem to date from 1683.⁶⁹ Was it looked upon as a new form, as a secular variant of Crashaw's semi-liturgical hymns, or as a modification of the Pindarick? In so far as Dryden is concerned, one is justified in assuming what Saintsbury ⁷⁰ implies—that Pindarick material was being cut to fit a new metrical pattern. If the choruses are omitted, it immediately seems evident that the stanzas derive from Cowley. The practice of other poets does not, however, admit of so categorical a reply. Purcell's third St. Cecilia's Day ode is in Latin,⁷¹ and is from the formal point of view little more than a corrupt anthem. The principal characteristic of these

⁶⁶ The original score in the British Museum is catalogued (R.M. 79 10) as follows: *Handel (George Frederick) Alexander's Feast or the Power of Musick An Ode Wrote in Honour of St. Cecilia by Mr Dryden. With the Recitatives, Songs, Symphonys and Chorus's for Voices and Instruments* (London, 1740). It is evident from the very score, however, that Handel's music literally drowns out Dryden's lines.

⁶⁷ On the literary associations of the poem, see *The Poetry of John Dryden*, by Mark Van Doren (Cambridge, 1909), p. 209.

⁶⁸ I am inclined to think, from what Wood says of the "Lord Kilmurray's verses" (*vide supra*, p. 60) that symphonic odes may have been performed at university Encoenia before 1680. Unfortunately I have not been able to find any of the originals.

⁶⁹ Cf. *The Works of Henry Purcell*, Vol. XI, Part I (London, 1902), where the choruses are first plainly marked in the "Birthday Ode for Queen Mary," of April 30, 1690. This poem begins,

Arise my Muse, and to thy tuneful Lyre
Compose a mighty ode

J. A. Westrup, in *Purcell* (London, 1937), p. 172, says that until 1683 Purcell was "learning" to write music.

⁷⁰ *English Prosody*, II, 382. Saintsbury does not deal specifically with the query, but his inference is plain.

⁷¹ Text in Purcell, *Works*, X, 2.

odes was, as a matter of fact, the laying of stress on "Harmony." Instruments were named individually and collectively, to provide an excuse for the composer's symphonic music. Thus Purcell's 1684 ode contains these words, which are almost the germ of Dryden's "Harmony Ode":

Raise, raise the voyce, all Instruments obey,
Let the sweet Lute its softest note display
For this is sacred music's holy day . . .
 'Crown the day with Harmony'
Hark, I hear Apollo cry;
And let every generous heart
In the Chorus bear a part.⁷²

Moreover, about 1705 John Hughes wrote *Six Cantatas, or Poems for Music*,⁷³ and published them with a Preface declaring that they were "the first essays of this kind." The claim might be considered spurious had not Hughes later on "altered" Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" "for Music," dividing it up into a bewildering number of Recitatives, Airs, and Duettos.⁷⁴ We may therefore suppose that Hughes and his composer, Christopher Pepusch, fancied that Dryden had not quite known what he was about. And—as so frequently happens in such cases—Dryden's "error" was perpetuated, as Cowley's was before him, while the orthodoxy of Hughes went relatively unappreciated.

• No doubt "Alexander's Feast" is hardly separable from the musical accompaniment. This necessitated the poet's emphasis on varying moods, his evocation of sound, and his use of the refrain. "Lovely Thais" was, one must admit, introduced solely because the composer had need of a passage suggesting the dulcet strains of harps and violins. Apart from all such practical concerns stands, however, Dryden's loyalty to the traditional idea of the ode. Thus his poem is biographical and succeeds in developing an episode of relatively slight impor-

⁷² *Ibid.*, X, 2 The author of this ode is unknown ⁷³ Chalmers, X, 30 ff

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, X, 42 On Pepusch, see Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, II, 790 and *passim*.

tance into a commentary on Alexander's career. The art with which this is managed testifies to the value of Dryden's experience in the composition of narrative passages in dramatic blank verse. I do not believe there is another seventeenth-century lyric which tells a story with such economy of means, or so masterfully avoids any lapse into mere chronicle. The fourth stanza in particular will illustrate the strength and dexterity of Dryden's art.

Even more suggestive of the poet's epoch (and incidentally also of Cowley) is the pictorial effect of the verse. The author of the "Resurrection" was fond enough of writing *al fresco* to venture not infrequently upon passages which call to mind rather cluttered and expressionistic baroque friezes. "Alexander's Feast" is more restrained and classical, suggesting some large canvas by Tiepolo, with interwoven episodes and decorative borders. Perhaps it might profitably be compared, from this point of view, with Milton's "Nativity Ode." At any rate, the pictorial element remains to the end one of the prominent characteristics of the seventeenth-century ode. It may be that Spenser was the ultimate source of inspiration. The outlines are, however, those of an era for which the neoclassical patterns of the late Renaissance superseded the colorful romantic medievalism of the Tudor time. Dryden's own art lines are best described by saying that they are everything which the later Pre-Raphaelite lines are not.

Finally one may observe also the impact of the epigrammatical, the abstract, upon poetic diction and feeling. When Dryden writes,

He rais'd a mortal to the skies;
She drew an angel down,

one feels that Cowley's violent, baroque antithesis has been forced back into the firm Latin mould whence, no doubt, it originally emerged. Remote now is the impassioned, sacred rhetoric of Milton, which unfailingly summons to mind both Shakespeare and the Prophets. When Milton writes,

So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves,

he relies on antithesis, too, but it is verbal, imagistic, not a *tour de force* of the intellect or an act of conformity with ancient rhetorical practice. Dryden skirts triteness, but avoids contamination: ✓

Drinking is the soldier's pleasure
Honour but an empty bubble.

Therewith was the eighteenth century ushered in.

We may conclude, therefore, that Dryden profoundly modified the Pindarick ode. He substituted for the intellectualistic brilliance and the imagistic grotesqueness of Cowley a smooth, serene, but still lively and virile poetic form which was at once closer to nature (in the Anne Killigrew poem) and closer to music (in "Alexander's Feast"). He wrote the first significant ode in the cantata form. And he established a rule based not on slavish imitations of the classical models but upon good taste and sound judgment.⁷⁵ It was impossible that an achievement so notable could be forgotten by practitioners of English verse. In a word, Dryden established the irregular ode as a valuable and interesting *genre*, not less important than the quatrain or the sonnet.⁷⁶ ✓

✓ One result of this accomplishment was that towards the close of the century most critics identified ode and Pindarick.

⁷⁵ As a translator of Horatian odes, Dryden has a somewhat curious record. His versions in the simpler measures—e.g., his translation of Book I, Ode 3—are only moderately successful. But his Pindarick paraphrase of Book III, Ode 29 (the *Ad Maecenatem* ode) is doubtless the best beloved of all English renderings of Horace. Thus Dryden achieved what Oldham had tried in vain to do. It is, perhaps, deducible from these facts that Dryden was the least "Latin" poet of his school, despite the sincerity of his appeal to the rules and standards of Roman verse.

⁷⁶ B. H. Newdigate, in the *London Mercury*, XXII, 438-42, defends the authenticity of an "overlooked ode" by Dryden—"On the Marriage of the Fair and Vertuous Lady, Mrs Anastasia Stafford." This is a Pindarick eulogy of good quality and of considerable historical interest. It first appeared in *Tixall Poetry* (1813) and suggests the possibility that Dryden may have written other such occasional odes, not deemed sufficiently good to be included in his collected work.

Thus Blount⁷⁷ has a chapter on the "Pindarique Ode" and none on the Horatian ode, which he evidently includes among "Songs and Sonnets, Madrigals, Roundelays, etc." John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, declared in his "Essay upon Poetry":⁷⁸

A higher flight, and of a happier Force,
Are Odes, the Muses most unruly horse.

And Dryden,⁷⁹ in "To My Honoured Friend Sir Robert Howard," comments on

Your easier odes, which for delight were penned,
Yet our instruction make their second end,

though Howard's book contained only songs and sonnets. Still all this must not lead one to suppose that the very real Horatian tradition which we have followed through the century was lost. It was not, as the next century will abundantly prove. What had happened was that along with many other French ideas there had come the critical theories of Rapin and Boileau who, falling back with a vengeance upon earlier restatements of Aristotle's *Poetics*, graded poetry according to the intrinsic excellence of each *genre* and then assigned pertinent "rules." Rapin asserted⁸⁰ that "certain Odes of Pindar, Anacreon and Horace" had no "other Rule but Enthusiasm" and regretted this exceedingly. In fact, he held that the only quality which could compensate for this "irregularity" was "transport."

Therewith the argument was shifted to the terrain of theory, hitherto alien to the English spirit.⁸¹ Neither Jonson nor Milton nor Marvell nor Cowley had held any such view of the ancients. They had sought rather to reproduce in their

⁷⁷ *De Re Poetica*, pp 65-68, and pp 69-71

⁷⁸ Spingarn, *Critical Essays, op cit*, pp 288-89 ⁷⁹ *Poetical Works*, p 301

⁸⁰ *The Whole Critical Works of Monsieur Rapin* (London, 1706), II, 137, 152-178, 321

⁸¹ See *Poetry in France and England*, by Jean Stewart (New York, 1931) pp 80-81

own tongue the beauties and contours of their models. We have seen that Dryden himself understood perfectly what Cowley, that intransigent Latinist with none of the Greek spirit about him, had found in Pindar—"Temeretic" of phrase, boldness of imagery. And he had sought to improve upon Cowley not by going into a "transport" but by lowering the key, putting shadows in the picture, cultivating melody of speech. Unfortunately these valuable lessons were ignored. For a whole generation, poets would hamstring themselves with "rules," and then use the ode as a kind of device to raise themselves by their own bootstraps. Yet that untoward end does not detract in the least from the very substantial achievement of the seventeenth century, which may not always have known just what it meant by the word "ode" but fashioned the thing none the less skillfully.⁸²

⁸² A few minor poets of the century may be listed here. *Miscellany Poems*, by Thomas Heyrick (London, 1691) is notable because it contains, so far as I know, the first Pindaricks written in sequence. James Shirley's "The Glories of Our Blood and State," from *The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses* (1659) has prevailingly been referred to as "Shirley's ode." Though a choral song, the stanzae are Jonsonian. *Festum Voluptatis, or the Banquet of Pleasure*, by Samuel Pick (London, 1639) has not uninteresting suggestions of the Pindarick malady but is decidedly minor.

CHAPTER SIX: *Ode Writers of the Augustan Age*

THOUGH the English ode as it was written during the first four decades of the eighteenth century must be considered an epigonous form, it is not for that reason devoid of interest.¹ Before describing it a glance backward is in order, so that the significance of the formal tradition established earlier may be quite clear. The ode became a matter of importance in English letters when a classical verse form rather roughly imitated was employed by poets in whom the urge to reflection and spiritual meditation was dominant. It is a curious fact that the only genuine Pindaric written in English during the whole of the seventeenth century was Ben Jonson's *Sir Lucius Cary* poem.² Even if others were sometime unearthed, the obvious fact would still remain that the writers of the period were not primarily concerned with copying Pindar. Even Cowley was not; for had he been, his imitations would have been closer to the originals. The real attractions were a stanza that lent itself easily to the use of those who "soared to higher things," and a conception of the lyric which emancipated the bard from the rather stale conventions of amorous verse. Now and then, it is true, the seventeenth-

¹ This chapter is deeply indebted to Lieser (*Die englische Ode im Zeitalter des Klassizismus*) and to Fairchild (*Religious Trends in English Poetry*). While the bibliographies supplied by the first are necessarily very incomplete, they are extensive and useful. Fairchild not only discusses many unfamiliar poets—including several whose work I have not seen—but supplies commentary on the "enthusiastic" ode.

² It is highly probable that English Pindarics were written at the universities. I have, however, unearthed none.

century Pindarick was flavored with a mild essence of love-making. But it remained in an overwhelming majority of instances the vehicle for religious fervor, patriotic zeal, philosophic reflection, and biographical tribute. At the time of Dryden's death the ode must have seemed, in retrospect, a high-brow and sanctimonious form.

Moreover, the laws governing its composition had never been clearly defined. The principal characteristics agreed upon were these: a dignified, usually "heroic" theme; irregularity of numbers; and venturesomeness of metaphor and phrase. These were all marks of the baroque spirit, and an era from which that spirit had well-nigh departed would be hard pressed to know what to do with garments it had once inhabited. Even more significant, perhaps, was the circumstance that there was something archaic about the fashioning of that raiment. The grandiloquent rhetoric, the echoes of Elizabethan poetic diction, the paradox, the omnipresent coruscation of "wit," the overt or hidden relationships with music—these things and more must have seemed to English writers of the Augustan time quite old-fashioned, despite a memorable graciousness and splendor.

The last-named qualities often went undiscerned. Writing in the *Guardian*³ on his old friend Tom Durfey, Addison remarked chaffingly that no one expected him to "pass the remainder of his life in a cage like a singing-bird," but conceded him all the "Pindaric liberty which is suitable to a man of his genius." Of this permission Durfey took full advantage, with horrendous results.⁴ This anecdote may serve to introduce the

³ The *Guardian*, No. 67.

⁴ *Wit and Mirth* (vide *supra*, p. 133) enshrines almost better than any other lyrical collection of the time the lesser art tendencies that flourished during and after the Restoration. Its songs are famous and frequently good. Its "musical odes" are illustrations of the fad seemingly created by Purcell and Blow. One—"The King's Health, an Ode; Perform'd before His Majesty, King William, at Montaguehouse. The Words made to an Excellent Tune of Mr. Peasibles"—is a classic instance of an ode that very nearly became a ballad. The six volumes contain, however, nothing that equals for rhapsodic banality the assorted Pindaricks of Durfey himself. Hawkins (*A General History of the Science and Prac-*

chronicle of changing tastes which we shall now begin, with the realization that it has not been and probably never will be set forth in its entirety. For the remarks quoted are cut from genuine Addisonian cloth. They reveal a critic always aware of the blended turgidity and genius, inspiration and lawlessness, of the poetic spokesmen for preceding generations. From the time he wrote the *Dissertatio*⁵ to the close of his career as a periodical writer, Addison was so sure of nothing as that reasonableness was a divinely ordained astringent. Just as it was not expedient to "rake the dunghill" of Catullus and Tibullus "for the sake of the jewels,"⁶ so also it was hardly worth while to keep alive old art forms wedded to extravagance and rodomontade. A kindred spirit was the Earl of Roscommon whose *Essay on Translated Verse*,⁷ published in

tice of Music, II, 819) has this note "In the fourth volume of the works of Tom Brown are three stanzas on him, wherein for presuming to call his ballads Lyric Odes, this judgment is denounced against him.

Horace shall pluck thee by the nose,

And Pindar beat thy brains out

⁵ *Dissertatio de insignioribus Romanorum Poetis*, reprinted in *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison*, edited by Richard Hurd (London, 1885), VI, 587-99.

⁶ The passage (*ibid.*, VI, 599) reads "Caeterum tamen poetarum vulgus, de istiusmodi mediocribus sunt, quos nec Dii nec homines concesserunt, et quamvis una et altera apud affectatas Catulli cantatiunculas, Tibulli aut Propertii inhonestam paginam, et carmina incuriosa, illucescat virtus, non tamen est operae pretium gemmas inter stercora eruere"

⁷ Chalmers, VIII, 261-64 The final stanza is an effective summary of his point of view:

O may I live to hail the glorious day,
And sing loud paeans through the crowded way,
When in triumphant state the British Muse,
True to herself, shall barbarous aid refuse,
And in the Roman majesty appear,
Which none know better, and none come so near

Johnson contradicted Dryden's praise of the *Essay*, on the ground that a reader could reach equally good conclusions by taking thought (Chalmers, VIII, 258-59), but forgets that what was true of his epoch was not true of Dryden's. See also the "Essay upon Unnatural Flights in Poetry," by George Granville, Lord Lansdowne (Chalmers, XI, 27). He upbraids Dryden for having celebrated the King's return in unseemly "rage"

To a wild audience he conform'd his voice

Mulgrave and Roscommon are praised

1684, may seem quite vapid now but was apparently the primer of good taste and sense at the time it appeared. To appreciate it and the essays of Addison one must have read through the ballad literature, the satire, and the metaphysical outpourings which came, along with Milton, Cowley, and Dryden, out of the cornucopia of the seventeenth century. They do not, however, account for everything. The change was far too radical to be explained on the basis of literary judgment alone.

For, as a matter of fact, idealism, religious meditation, and enthusiasm were not dead during the eighteenth century. If one had thought so, Professor Fairchild's treatise on the religious poets would have been a sufficient corrective. There were, first of all, two kinds of "enthusiastic" ode, or rather (perhaps) two exemplars of the same enthusiastic species. In his "Annotations" to *The Passion of our Blessed Saviour, Represented in a Pindarique Ode*, John Norris wrote: "This ode is after the Pindarick way; [which is the highest and most significant kind of writing in verse; and consequently fit only for great and noble subjects; such as are boundless as its own numbers: The Nature of which is to be loose and free; and not to keep one settled pace; but sometimes like a gentle stream, to glide along peaceably within its own channel; and sometimes like an impetuous torrent, to roll on extravagantly, and carry all else before it." ⁸

That was the older view of the matter, restated now with an especial Neo-Platonic nuance to be expected of one who cherished the heritage of Henry More. The close relationship between Neo-Platonism and untrammelled writing, noted in German literature by Walzel,⁹ cannot be examined here. Yet it may well seem that Neo-Platonism was in Norris' time the

Who seek from poetry a lasting name,
May in their lessons learn the road to fame.

⁸ *Collection of Miscellanies Consisting of Poems, Essays, Discourses and Letters*, by John Norris (London, 1717), p. 6

⁹ *Deutsche Romantik*, by Oskar Walzel (Leipzig, 1923), I, 2-4 and *passim*.

road which led to that rather professional form of "soaring" to which later times would apply the term "mysticism." Norris is often an interesting poet and sometimes a valuable one. "The Passion of Our Blessed Saviour" is an elaborate baroque hymn which not infrequently suggests Benlowes.¹⁰ "The Consummation: A Pindarick Ode" seems to me far better, calling to mind as it does certain passages in that vigorous German poet, Annette von Droste-Hulshoff. Melmoth said that the "poetical publications" of Norris were "very ingenious."¹¹ Certainly they are by no means wholly devoid of appeal to the student of ode forms.

The other kind of "enthusiasm" is that sponsored by John Dennis. He was likewise a religious man, at least to the extent of believing that worship and poetry must conjoin.¹² For, as *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*¹³ contends, man is in danger of being riven in twain by the contrasted faculties of reason and passion; and though poetry is a happy mating of the two, being the art of instruction through the medium of feeling, it can attain to *enthusiastic* feeling only through religion. By comparison with Norris, Dennis is a moralist, a seeker after poise and harmonious living. Doubtless his own verse suffices to prove that a critic can seldom practice what he preaches. The "Pindaric Ode to the King"¹⁴ is, at any rate, a trite essay in the manner of Cowley.

Both Cowley and Dennis helped to fashion the outlook of that prolific begetter of Pindaricks, Aaron Hill, Esq., whose posthumous *Works*¹⁵ record the grim determination with which some eighteenth-century bards fanned the flames of

¹⁰ The stanzaic pattern, 54553445, is likewise reminiscent of the seventeenth century

¹¹ *Memoirs of a Late Eminent Advocate*, etc., by William Melmoth (London, 1796), p. 17, footnote.

¹² Fairchild, *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, pp. 183 ff

¹³ By Mr Dennis (London, 1704), p. 15.

¹⁴ *Miscellanies in Verse and Prose*, by Mr. Dennis (London, 1693), pp. 1-10. The poem lumbars along through fourteen stanzas

¹⁵ *The Works of the Late Aaron Hill Esq.* (4 vols., London, 1774).

"enthusiasm." The panegyric "On Mr. Cowley Introducing Pindaric Verse" ¹⁶ is proof enough that Bishop Sprat's spirit was still abroad in the second decade of the eighteenth century. Most of Hill's better Pindaricks are Cowleyesque, for example "To Celinda, Complaining That Her Harpsichord Was out of Tune;" and when he copies the *Mistress* as in "The Change," he succeeds momentarily in not being an utterly worthless poet. But Hill's chief interest lies in the robust allegiance he gives to "enthusiasm" and the "loftiness" it engenders. Thus he writes in "Advice to the Poets":

Not the *low muse*, who lends her feeble fire,
To flush pale spleen, or light up loose desire;
But that bright influence, that expansive glow,
Which, first, in angel's numbers learnt to flow

Thou path of praise, by heav'n's first fav'rites trod,
Thou voice of prophets, and thou breath of God! ¹⁷

This attitude came straight out of the seventeenth century and must not be confused with the regulated emotionalism of French ode theory. With Boileau, the idea that Pindar was sometimes possessed of a kind of holy madness and therefore disrupted the pattern of his verse, creating a *beau désordre*, ¹⁸ had, as we have seen, come into fashion. His own *Ode sur la prise de Namur* ¹⁹ was accepted as a model by those who affected the French style, and parodied by those who detested most of the three parts of Gaul. Rapin ²⁰ taught that the ode must have as much "nobleness, elevation and transport" as the eclogue should have "simplicity and modesty." Pindar was its greatest exemplar, having the "most unbridled

¹⁶ *Ibid*, III, 238 Compare with this ode a passage from one of Hill's letters (*ibid*, I, 373) "What a prodigious enthusiasm has poetry! that can lift a man out of himself"

¹⁷ *Ibid*, III, 209-24 Another ode of some interest is "An Ode, on Occasion of Mr Handel's Great Te Deum, at the Feast of the Sons of the Clergy, on February 1, 1732" (III, 167).

¹⁸ Boileau, *Œuvres poétiques*, p. 368.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *The Whole Critical Works of Monsieur Rapin*, II, 231.

and irregular fancy in the world." Obsessed as he was with the idea of finding rules and patterns for every sort of creative endeavor, Rapin may be said to have made irregularity regular. He was an authority on gardens; and he may have thought of Pindaric verse as a kind of "English park" inside which all things were permissible. The popularity of such doctrines was immense at one time, however zealously the learned like Trapp²¹ might fulminate against them.

Englishmen like Dennis were not, however, much concerned with what the laws of any given *genre* might be. To them it seemed that the very fate of poetry itself was at stake, under the impact of new and frivolous times. They clutched at the memory of Cowley as a wartime refugee might cling to his nation's flag. Yet singularly enough the Pindarick verse of the time failed utterly to accomplish what it was expected to do. It did not open vistas of a world more beautiful and lucent. Concerning the odes of such writers as William Somerville²² and John Pomfret,²³ Edmund Smith²⁴ and George Stepney,²⁵ one need only say that they were typically epigonous. Occasionally some poem has the quality of a respectable editorial, being comment that enshrines a fleetingly valuable emotional reaction to an historical occurrence. Thus the "Ode on the Marriage of the Princess Anne and Prince George of Denmark," which Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, indited in reflective stanzas,²⁶ has some real value as documentary evidence anent the spirit of the times; and Elijah Fenton's "Ode

²¹ *Praelectiones poeticae*, by Joseph Trapp (London, 1711), II, 104. "Poema, ab omnibus tum metri, tum rationis, legibus solutum, quantumvis interim infusum, elumbe & ridiculum, quincunque suffarcinat, selle secum agi estimat, modo portentosam prolem Pindaricum nominaverit."

²² See his odes honoring the Duke of Marlborough, Chalmers, XI, 188-89. He also paraphrased Horace in Dryden's manner.

²³ Chalmers, Vol. VIII. He wrote on morose subjects, as in "A Prospect of Death" and "Dies Novissima." His odes ring with echoes of Cowley and Dryden.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. IX. See his "Ode for the Year 1705," p. 207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, VIII, 360-61.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, IX, 336. His Latin ode on the same occasion is much better, and is an interesting example of the "medley."

to the Sun, for the New Year, 1707" ²⁷ may have been worth taking as a patriotic stimulant.

Two "Pindarists" rise somewhat above the average. Thomas Yalden provided his age with a few moments of excitement when he was suspected of having had a part in Atterbury's plot, and he must have served not a little, through his poetry, to add to the soundness of its slumbers. Nevertheless there are moments in his Pindarick and Horatian odes that rise to near the level of Flatman. Thus, for example, "To Mr. Congreve; an Epistolary Ode," written in 1693, is mildly interesting literary and moral discussion, with the emphasis on disenchantment.²⁸ And though "Human Life" is an uninspired paraphrase of Solomon,²⁹ it is not completely devoid of wisdom. Both poems show how easily a man of meditative pursuits might fall into Cowley's vein. Beyond that Yalden is interesting because his Pindarick verse is always disintegrating (or crystallizing, if one prefers) into stopped, antithetical couplets. The other Pindarist is William Wollaston who, having gone to the country from the university, had time on his hands for reflection. "There one day," he records, "I vented some of my melancholy in such a negligent Pindaric as this." ³⁰ There follows an ode of seven long stanzas, curiously similar in form to the odes of Francis Thompson and reminiscent of the seventeenth-century poetic high tide.

Nor are matters vastly different when one turns to the religious poets. The age accomplished great things in hymnody, as we shall see. But it may well be that the same popularizing, missionary impulse which led to that success prevented the

²⁷ *Ibid.*, X, 391 This is almost an editorial

²⁸ *Ibid.*, XI, 67 Yalden was evidently a misogynist, the poem bristling with attacks on love and marriage

²⁹ *Ibid.*, XI, 65 He also imitated Casimir in seven-line stanzas

³⁰ "Memoirs of William Wollaston," in *Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century*, by John Nichols (London, 1817), p. 187 Wollaston has also (p. 184) an interesting note on current university practice "Fellow of the College being dead, the Lecturer sent down to the several tables in the hall in order to make verses against the funeral." Eventually Wollaston responded in Hebrew.

more resolute flight of the poetic imagination to regions wherein Vaughan and Crashaw had been so thoroughly at home. Bishop Thomas Ken was, if one excepts Norris, the greatest of the Anglican poets. In addition he kept up the interest of preceding learned generations in music, being, it would seem, an able practitioner. Nevertheless Ken's Pindaricks are really very bad, heaping up cumbersome phrases to no earthly avail.³¹ In "Psyche: or Magdalum" the "penitential utterances" are in Pindarick form; but this prosodic novelty does not suffice to make the poem even tolerable. The elder Samuel Wesley was a lesser man than Ken, but his irregular ode "On the Death of Her Late Sacred Majesty, Mary Queen of England"³² seems notably better than anything Ken wrote in the same form. Though, as we shall see, Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe is of some importance in the history of hymnody, her Pindaricks are thin and mawkish.³³ "Philomela" was an amiable and virtuous soul, but she cut a sorry figure on Cowley's Pegasus. The odes written by her husband, Thomas, are just a little worse than her own.³⁴

The sole religious Pindarist of the early eighteenth century³⁵ whose work possesses any interest for the student of art forms is Isaac Watts, whose tastes were those of a lesser Dryden.³⁶ He explains that he has "generally" conformed his lines "to the shorter size of the ancients, and avoided to imi-

³¹ *The Works of the Right Reverend, Learned and Pious, Thomas Ken*, edited by William Hawkins (London, 1721)

³² *Elegies on the Queen and the Archbishop*, by Samuel Wesley (London, 1695) The poem is the first of two, the idea of an elegy in Pindarick form being borrowed, of course, from Cowley

³³ *The Works of Elizabeth Rowe*, edited by Thomas Rowe (London, 1796)

³⁴ *Ibid*, Vol II These are versions of Horace

³⁵ One or the other cognate title may be indicated *Poems on Several Subjects, formerly written by an Under-Graduate at the University* (London, 1714) contains religious Pindaricks (e.g., "Eternity," p 25) which may be assigned a modest place between John Hall and Elizabeth Rowe An instance of the ode devoted to religious argument may be seen in "A Letter to the Author of the Ode on Mr Pelham's Death." Fairchild (*op. cit.*, p 63) cites *A Pindaric Poem, on the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts* (London, 1711), attributed to Elkanah Settle.

³⁶ Chalmers, Vol XIII.

tate the excessive lengths to which some modern writers have stretched their sentences, and especially the concluding verse." That was a quantitative definition, perhaps, of what Dryden had meant by "smoothness of numbers." Watts had neither great metaphorical power nor literary ambition, though he constantly makes one feel that he might have been both, if anything less important than spreading the Gospel had interested him. The blank verse translation of Casimir's "The Celebrated Victory of the Poles,"³⁷ for example, is as spirited as anything between Milton and Gray. And the following stanza from "Two Happy Rivals" has a Drydenesque clarity and directness, however greatly it may suffer from being abstract and dictionally trite:

A long farewell to all below,
Farewell to all that sense can show,
To golden scenes and flowery fields,
To all the worlds that Fancy builds,
And all that poets know
Now the swift transports of the mind
Leave the fluttering Muse behind,
A thousand loose Pindaric flumes fly scattering down the wind,
Among the clouds I lose my breath,
The rapture grows too strong.
The feeble powers that Nature gave
Faint and droop downward to the grave.
Receive their fall, thou treasurer of Death;
I will no more demand my tongue,
Till the gross organ well refin'd
Can trace the boundless flights of an unfettered mind
And raise an equal song.

The theme of the "Happy Man," so popular then with writers who yearned to embellish Horace's *Integer Vitae* with Christian sentiment, served Watts for one of his best short Pindaricks. Here the influence of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" is manifest not merely in the general disposition of the poetic

³⁷ This poem was translated into blank verse with "large Additions"

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material but also in the specific references to music.³⁸ "An Elegy on Mr. Thomas Gouge" continues a tradition established by Cowley, and is as a matter of fact reminiscent of that poet. Watts nowhere else tries such outrageous conceits and antitheses, and the effect is on the whole more than slightly ridiculous. Even so the effort evoked lines which leave one thinking of what Watts might have been had he turned whole-heartedly to art:

✓ \ And trac'd the well-known turnings of the golden streets
And walk'd among the stars.

If one omits the unfortunate "well-known," the verse conveys the mood of religious wonder which later on lighted up so clearly the verse of George MacDonald and Gilbert Chesterton.

This, then, is in brief the story of the "enthusiastic" ode during the early years of the eighteenth century. We may append the negative fervor which expressed itself in satire. Daniel Defoe termed the Pindaricks in which he lashed the Tories' "hymns": and it must be admitted the word was put to strange use in describing ditties that are more properly political ballads or songs.³⁹ They divert Cowley's form to the uses of political journalism far more effectively than did Butler's odes. The "Hymn to Peace" with which Defoe greeted the year 1706 is in the main a sequence of vigorous couplets, but sometimes the thought spills over and takes advantage of irregularity:

Covered with Clouds, and Ecclesiastick Mists,
In zealous Masks for Conscience' sake oppress,
And damn Men's Souls to purchase peace.⁴⁰

The "Hymn to the Pillory" is among the more savage Pin-

³⁸ For other obvious marks of discipleship to Dryden, see "The Law Given at Sinai"

³⁹ For the texts see *A Collection of the Best English Poetry, by Several Hands* (London, 1717).

⁴⁰ Of interest are the psychological paraphernalia of the poem—spleen, etc.

daricks in English,⁴¹ and leaves one thinking that if Aaron Hill could have "felt" with as much "enthusiasm" as Defoe had mordancy the story of eighteenth-century verse might have been different. It is apparent, however, that the satirist was being pushed headlong to the couplet; and there is no Defoe tradition. During a brief period the Pindarick did, however, to some extent remain an instrument of attack, as many of the miscellanies indicate.⁴² Thus *The Muses Farewell to Popery and Slavery*⁴³ (a little volume of interest primarily because of its crude denunciation of Dryden) aims couplet, ballad meter, and ode stanza at the Jesuits.

Therewith we come to the poet who better than any other figure of the period illustrates the forces at work. Matthew Prior was a genius, but his poetry⁴⁴ leaves one regretting the absence of conclusive proof of that genius. A modern writer has risked the declaration that the difference between Prior and Verlaine was a matter of absinthe; and though I should not wish to endorse his view, it does seem clear that the author of "Solomon" was suspended midway between levity and redemption. He was, as Professor Fairchild has indicated,⁴⁵ a poet of the absence rather than the possession of religion; and yet there are times when he seems to attain a kind of greatness within reach only of those who have shared the Socratic experience of the Good. Prior's early Pindaricks are of flimsy texture. His "heroic" Horatian odes, however, have resonance, virility, and even (within limits) charm. It is difficult to reconstruct the mood in which the "Ode, Presented to the King" was written, but to those who can do so the poem will

⁴¹ For example, the following lines

*Jobbers, and Brokers of the City Stocks,
With forty Thousand Follies at their Backs,
Who make our Banks and Companies obey,
Or sink 'em all the shortest way*

⁴² See, for example, *A Collection of Poems for and against Dr Sacheverell* (London, 1710)

⁴³ London, 1689 See "A View of the Religion of the Town," p 109

⁴⁴ Chalmers, Vol X

⁴⁵ Fairchild, *op cit*, pp. 32-40.

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not seem wholly unworthy of a place beside Marvell's great lyric:

Vanquish again! though she be gone,
Whose garland crown'd the victor's hair;
And reign, though she has left the throne,
Who made thy glory worth thy care.

That quatrain echoes the most felicitous strains of Caroline verse. Prior is fond of using the same stanza in many of his amorous odes, though he also employs Jonsonian forms.

The true significance of "Matt" Prior as a representative of his era lies elsewhere.¹ That era prided itself upon the 'smoothness of its numbers.' By this was meant absolute regularity of scansion, the absence of harsh or grating sounds, and clarity of composition. The good poem was one which conveyed its point or sentiment without raising subsidiary questions. Perhaps one may hold that the underlying aesthetic conception bears a certain resemblance to functional architecture. Since crisp phrases and short lines are more transparent than their opposites, the period naturally favored them. It might, indeed, almost be termed the age of monosyllabic octosyllables. One consequence of this prevailing attitude was the dominance of set forms in Horatian ode writing, primarily the quatrain. Moreover, the survival of older convictions that the ode is a superior, a more learned, lyric is shown in the avoidance of the "common" or "four-three" measure. No self-respecting ode writer of the period employs this easy—no doubt deceptively easy—stanza, which is reserved for the hymn and the song. Certain modifications of it were, however, introduced, largely I think because of the influence of hymnody.

Prior's lesser odes reveal these trends clearly. He was a Horatian, a writer of Anacreontica, and a dallier in Catullus. At their best Prior's quatrain stanzas are excellent, though they are—with the exception of the "Ode, Presented to the King" already noted—seldom lavished on worthy themes. His

love verse is sexual without being exciting. Nevertheless the following ode is so representative of what the period was bent on achieving in this *genre* that it may be quoted and analyzed:

The merchant, to secure his treasure,
Conveys it in a borrow'd name:
Euphelia serves to grace my measure;
But Chloe is my real flame.

My softest verse, my darling lyre,
Upon Euphelia's toilet lay;
When Chloe noted her desire
That I should sing, that I should play.

My lyre I tune, my voice I raise,
But with my numbers mix my sighs;
And whilst I sing Euphelia's praise,
I fix my soul on Chloe's eyes.

Fair Chloe blushed, Euphelia frown'd;
I sung and gaz'd, I played and trembled,
And Venus to the Loves around
Remarked how ill we all dissembled.

This lyric sounds the classic note of the contrariness of love, which—a favorite theme with Prior—refuses to be reasonable. It is not sententious, is in its own way compounded of sheer delight. An examination of the form will reveal these facts. there are only two words of more than two syllables, and only sixteen of more than one syllable; the diction is seemingly artless; and yet the poem as a whole is a highly sophisticated compound. The author deftly suggests the natures of the two girls, introduces a whiff of feminine atmosphere, and relies for drama upon swiftly contrasted psychological moods. As a whole this "little ode" reflects perfectly the pose which Prior loved to adopt, and which he described in the opening lines of "The Secretary":

While with labour assiduous due pleasure I mix,
And in one day atone for the business of six,

- ✕ In a little Dutch chaise on a Saturday night,
On my left hand my Horace, a nymph on my right.

In all these matters Prior symbolized the transformation by which Waller became Alexander Pope. Nevertheless he imitated Horace in stanzas breathing hatred of the French, and spun out a bellicose "*Carmen Saeculare*" into almost endless Pindarick concatenations of clustered couplets. Stranger still is his adaptation of the Spenserian stanza in the "Ode, Inscribed to Queen Anne" which is professedly modeled upon the *Qualem ministrum* ode. Few prefaces are more curious than that to this "little journey" into "the country" of Parnassus, likening as it does Spenser to Horace.⁴⁶ Note what use the poet makes of the romance that lies in names:

Bright swords, and crested helms, and pointed spears,
In artful piles around the work shall lie;
And shields indented deep in ancient wars,
Blazon'd with signs of Gallic heraldry,
And standards with distinguish'd honours bright,
Marks of high power and national command,
Which Valois' sons, and Bourbon's bore in fight,
Or gave to Foix', or Montmorency's hand.
Great spoils, which Gallia must to Britain yield,
From Cressy's battle sav'd to grace Ramilla's field.

This poem was not the sole ode in this stanza to get itself written during the early years of the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ But

⁴⁶ The final paragraph of the Preface reads in part "My two great examples, Horace and Spenser, in many things resemble each other both have a height of imagination, and a majesty of expression in describing the sublime, and both know how to temper these talents, and sweeten the description, so as to make it lovely as well as pompous, both have equally that agreeable manner of mixing morality with their story, and that *curiosa felicitas* in the choice of their diction, which every writer aims at, and so few have reached Both are particularly fine in their images, and knowing in their numbers"

⁴⁷ The Spenserian stanza was used in Henry More's *Philosophical Poems* (1647). Samuel Woodford employed it in the "Epoda" to the *Legend of Love*, but the word "epoda" has only a vague relationship to "epode" in the accepted sense. See *The Critics of Edmund Spenser*, by Herbert E. Cory (Berkeley, Calif., 1910-12), p. 89. *A Reference Guide to Edmund Spenser*, by Frederic Ives Carpenter (Chicago, 1923), cites (p. 271) a "Pindarick Ode, in Imitation of Spenser's

Prior's use of it and, of course, also of the Pindarick form, is evidence enough that almost in spite of himself he was haunted by the greatness of preceding generations and tempted now and then to throw off the chains of his Roman muse.⁴⁸ That temptation was stronger in the Augustan age than the principal spokesmen for that age would have admitted. Prior helps to make the later rise of Warton and Collins credible.

The true Romans of the period were those who wrote its couplets and its favorite critical doctrines. They broke with the immediate past but could not escape the fact that it existed round about them. While it is true that the conflict of ideas we have noted in connection with Dryden played a highly important part, one must also not neglect a number of circumstances which affected the attitude of men toward poetic form. The first of these was literary life at the universities after a period of turmoil and revolution. As it grew towards maturity in the great old colleges, young genius turned towards a new era of the practical, the reasonable, which men then thought was about to dawn. Poetry also was to become rational, moral, lucid; and so the ode, associated with extravagance, "wit," and sonorous eloquence, was naturally suspect. Addison is here the best witness. In his *Account of the Greatest English Poets*, written in 1694, he said.

Great Cowley then (a mighty genius) wrote,
O'er-run with wit, and lavish of his thought:
His turns too closely on the reader press:
He more had pleased us, had he pleas'd us less

Pardon, great poet, that I dare to name
Th' unnumbered beauties of thy verse with blame

What Muse but thine can equal hints inspire,
And fit the deep-mouth'd Pindar to thy lyre:

Divine Love," from *Poems on Several Occasions* *Written by a Lady* (London, 1727).

⁴⁸ Cory, *op cit*, pp 143-45.

Pindar, whom others in a labour'd strain,
And forced expression, imitate in vain? ⁴⁹

This was akin to what Parnell would say in his *Essay on the Different Styles of Poetry*:

There metaphors on metaphors abound,
And sense by differing images confound:
Strange injudicious management of thought,
Not born to rage, nor into method brought.⁵⁰

In the *Spectator* Addison had a pulpit from which these strictures (mingled with words of affectionate praise) could be reiterated at intervals. After commenting on "scholar's eggs" and "pairs of wings," he says: "I shall therefore conclude with a word of advice to those admirable English authors who call themselves Pindaric writers, that they would apply themselves to this kind of wit without loss of time, as being provided better than any other poets with verses of all sizes and dimensions."⁵¹ Pindar was, indeed, a great poet, who was "hurried on by a natural fire and impetuosity to vast conceptions of things and noble sallies of the imagination": but "men of a sober and moderate fancy" made themselves ridiculous trying to imitate him.⁵² The *Spectator* is also an early witness to the fact that on the basis of Pindar's "wildness" primitive verse began to bear the ode label. Steele cited ⁵³ a "Lapland love song" as an illustration of numbers "as loose and unequal as those in which the British ladies sport their Pindaricks." Some issues later, this same poem was dubbed an ode. To this point there go back not only Gray's Norse and Welsh odes, but the habit of Warton ⁵⁴ and other

⁴⁹ Chalmers, IX, 529.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, IX, 514.

⁵¹ *Spectator*, No. 58

⁵² *Ibid*, No 160

⁵³ *Ibid*, No 366

⁵⁴ For example, "scaldic odes," *op cit*, I, lxii Compare also *Specimens of the Early English Poets*, by George Ellis (London, 1801), *passim*, and *The Citizen of the World, and the Bee*, by Oliver Goldsmith, edited by Austin Dobson (New York, 1934), p 311 The use of the term is rooted in French critical practice, but goes back in English at least as far as Sir William Temple, as witness his "Of Poetry" (text in *Restoration Literature*, pp. 461 ff.) There was a luxuriant outcropping of "primitive" odes during the second half of the century, partly

eighteenth-century critics of referring to Anglo-Saxon, Indian, and similar "odes."

The issue of wildness versus regularity was likewise confronted by William Congreve. His was a genuine ambition to be a poet.⁵⁵ Congreve showered King William with compliments and almost buried him under rhetorical exclamations on the occasion of the taking of Namur; his muse "soared with rapture" while he celebrated the virtues of the Lord High Treasurer, the Earl of Godolphin; and he wrote verse devoid of neither feeling nor polish—some of the stanzas possess, as a matter of fact, an almost Drydenesque charm—"On Mrs. Arabella Hunt, Singing."⁵⁶ But his most illustrious achievement in lyric verse was the "Daughters of Memory" ode, composed in the orthodox tripartite Pindaric fashion, though without the accompanying labels, in the hope of thus correcting the omnipresent irregularity to which Cowley had given rise. "I believe," he remarked in the "Discourse" prefixed to this ode, "those irregular odes of Mr. Cowley may have been the principal, though innocent occasion of so many deformed poems since."⁵⁷ This discovery was alternately praised and

as a result of the Rapinesque classification of odes. Thus J. Hoole, in the preface to *Critical Essays on Some of the Poems of Several English Poets*, by John Scott (London, 1785), says (p. xxiv) of Scott's practice: "The Odes, as the author informs us, were written at very different periods, and some appear to be his earliest effusions in poetry. The style of these odes is various; gay and familiar, pathetic and sublime. The Mexican Ode may admit of much praise. It opens with a spirited abruptness—it ends with equal dignity after the Prophecy of the Mexican Idol." But Hoole's remarks indicate also, as much other testimony does, how powerful the appeal of exotic materials then was.

⁵⁵ For the poems cited, see Chalmers, Vol. X.

⁵⁶ This poem is irregular, a circumstance for which Congreve later apologized. Dr. Johnson (*Lives of the Poets*, IV, 20) said this appeared to be the best of Congreve's lyrics, but even so gave it scant praise. Mrs. Hunt was reported to have had a "voice like a bull-finch's."

⁵⁷ Congreve certainly does make it appear that he had studied Pindar's originals, but when he quotes it is from a Latin translation. Doubtless he used an edition in which Greek, Latin paraphrase and notes were combined. The final paragraph of his "Discourse" reads: "The shortness of the following ode will, I hope, atone for the length of the preface, and, in some measure, for the defects which may be found in it. It consists of the same number of stanzas with that beautiful ode of Pindar, which is the first of his Pythics, and though I was

blamed. For his part Samuel Cobb likewise prefixed a "Letter" to his *The Female Reign*,⁵⁸ in which he held that "however the seeming wildness of this sort of verse ought to be restrained, the Strophe, Antistrophe, etc., will never bear in English, as may be witnessed by the servile Imitation of the Dactyles and Spondees made by Sir P. Sidney."

Academic and other critics of the period added little to what Boileau, Addison, and Congreve had said.⁵⁹ Edward Bysshe⁶⁰ contented himself with estimating the probably maximum dimensions of the Pindarick line and stanza. Samuel Say⁶¹ is interesting by reason of his approbation of "Lycidas," which he termed a "pastoral ode." Two mid-century critics, Edward Manwaring⁶² and John Mason,⁶³ made some effort to reconcile ode writing and music, Mason appending a disquisition on the virtues proper to the Anacreontic. It may

unable to imitate him in any other beauty, I resolved to endeavour to copy his brevity, and take advantage of a remark he has made in the last strophe of the same ode; which take in the paraphrase of Sudorius,

Qui multa paucis stringere commodè
Novere, morsus hi facile invidos
Sperount, & auris mensque pura
Omne supervacuum rejectat "

⁵⁸ *The Female Reign An Ode Alluding to Horace, Book IV, Ode 14 With a Letter to a Gentleman in the University*, by Samuel Cobb (London, 1709) The quotation is, of course, from the "Letter" Cobb says further "I have avoided Turns, as thinking that they debase the Loftiness of the Ode You will easily perceive whether I have reach'd that acer Spiritus & Vis, recommended by Horace, as the Genius of Poetry Whether you will call the following Lines a Pindaric Ode, or Irregular Stanzas, gives me no Disturbance "

⁵⁹ Note Prior's remark in the "Carmen Seculare"

Whither would the Muse aspire,
With Pindar's rage, without his fire

⁶⁰ *The Art of English Poetry*, by Edward Bysshe (8th edition, London, 1738),

p. 37

⁶¹ *Poems, and Two Critical Essays*, by Samuel Say (London, 1745), p. 117

⁶² *Of Harmony and Numbers in Latin and English Prose, and in English Poetry*, by the Rev Edward Manwaring (London, 1744), especially Chapter IV

⁶³ *Essays on Poetical and Prosaic Numbers, and Elocution*, by John Mason (London, 1761), pp. 9-67. Omond (*English Metrists*, pp. 50 ff.) comments favorably on the treatise, and it is certainly one of the ablest books of its kind to have appeared during the eighteenth century The first edition was published in 1749. The rules laid down for the Anacreontic are very artificial and dated, but the general theory of relationships between verse and music is interesting

be added that schoolbooks of the period ⁶⁴ refer to Pindar but stress the odes of Horace—or it may be the ode of Sappho that is quoted by Longinus, whose comments on the “sublime,” understood or misunderstood, played so great a role in the further development of critical theory.

The trend thus briefly described was observed carefully by some foreign writers of the period. Gleim's *Oden und Lieder in fuenf Buechern* ⁶⁵ is a collection of badly girl-smitten effusions, which are often charming and graceful. There is a learned introductory essay on the ode, and a concluding chapter on Greek music. The essay is of deep interest because it studies the English trends of the Addisonian time, by which the author is very considerably influenced. Gleim criticizes Cowley, ⁶⁶ adopts the fashionable division into religious, heroic, and Anacreontic odes, and refers to the odes of Laplanders, “Americans,” and Russians. ⁶⁷ Quoting the *Guardian* at length, ⁶⁸ he agrees that the classic exemplars of the “little ode” are above reproach, and adds that the English normally overload their efforts to imitate such odes either with “reflection” or an excess of “wit.” He does not, however, favor the didactic trend, which in England so profoundly modified the conception of the lyric impulse and thus tapped a vein of great satirical writing. ⁶⁹ There is no other essay which so well summarizes the dominant English taste of the time.

⁶⁴ *The Art of Rhetoric Made Easy, or, the Elements of Oratory*, by John Holmes (London, 1738), pp. 30 ff. Compare what is written there concerning Sappho with Addison's remarks in the *Spectator*, No. 223.

⁶⁵ Hamburg, 1747. The title page does not bear the author's name.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. xxxvii. The criticism seems to echo Congreve, but may possibly be based on a periodical essay. At any rate, it is misinformed.

⁶⁷ He writes also (*ibid.*, pp. xi–xiii). “Man hat mich auch versichert, dass viele Scherz und Liebeslieder der Polen und die kriegereischen Dumy der Cosaken, zu welchen sie an der Pandore zu spielen pflegen, in ihrer Art unvergleichlich sind und zu den beliebtesten Gesaengen der Franzosen und Italiaener den Vorzug streitig machen koennten.”

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxiii. The quotation is from the *Guardian*, No. 16. There is also (p. xxxiii) an interesting comment on English song collections.

⁶⁹ See *Sir William Temple*, by Clara Marburg (New Haven, Conn., 1932), pp. 80–82.

The second circumstance to be noted is somewhat more conjectural and difficult to describe. It would appear that most English writers were less interested in the minutiae of poetic theory than in whether their verse trappings were in the height of fashion. The wide influence of men like Dorset and Roscommon was in large measure attributable, perhaps, to their elegant concern lest the English Court, under Hanoverian sovereigns, lose all the fastidious gentlemanliness which the Stuarts had attempted to import from France.⁷⁰ The aristocrats may sometimes have aided literature for political reasons, but one is inclined to believe them more usually guided by an instinct for good manners as the only possible aura of a ruling caste.⁷¹ At all events, temperance and decorum, as insisted upon by the arbiters of good taste, gradually forced the Pindarick to the wall for a time. It survived in the hands of those who manufactured "transport" for royal ears, or in those of men who went quiet, meditative ways remote from the crowded literary scene. To the social arbiters of that age, the baroque may well have seemed cumbersome and slow-witted. Gothic turrets, too, might be symbols of romantic pursuits at Twickenham and elsewhere, but the Gothic spirit itself had flown. Indeed, as the knife of satire grew keener, these and with them the Pindarick became themes of jest when no other subject was at hand.

✓ The dominant Augustan poets—Pope, Addison, Swift, Parnell⁷²—left the form alone or turned from it after a few ex-

⁷⁰ See Prior's "Dedication" to Dorset (Chalmers, X, 119-26) "If we wanted a foreign testimony, La Fontaine and St Evremond have acknowledged, that he was a perfect master in the beauty and fineness of their language, and of all that they call *belles lettres*. Nor was this nicety of judgment confined only to books and literature, but was the same in statuary, painting and all other parts of art."

⁷¹ See Johnson on Sheffield, in *Lives of the Poets*, III, 193-202.

⁷² For the poems of Parnell, see Chalmers, Vol. X. It is, of course, true that some of his compositions—notably the "Hymn to Contentment," which is "L'Allegro" in very Augustan raiment, and "Piety, or the Vision"—have a certain relation to the ode tradition. But the narrative note predominates to such an extent that I have felt justified in excluding this poet's work from consideration in the text.

periments.⁷³ Thus the young Swift,⁷³ toiling over the letters and memoirs of Sir William Temple, had been moved to celebrate the ideals of the Athenian Society in numbers said to have drawn from Dryden one of the most bluntly negative of his recorded literary judgments.⁷⁴ It is not a mere coincidence that the odes to Temple should have proved somewhat better; for the Pindarick that Cowley designed was almost most successful when practiced in the biographical strain. Indeed, the "Ode to Dr. William Sancroft," though unfinished, illustrates this point so well that many critics speak a kind word for it.⁷⁵ I am not sure this indulgence is deserved. At any rate "The Battle of the Books" is a shrewd and programmatic statement on Swift's own development.⁷⁶ There Pindar slays Oldham and "Afra the Amazon, light of foot"; and when Cowley advances, looking the very image of his antagonist, he is likewise struck down in spite of valiant resistance. Thenceforth Swift was wholly sure of himself, and with his strange double—William Hogarth—became the very quintessence of the spirit of his time.

Swift does, to be sure, occasionally write what with a little exercise of the imagination might be termed an Horatian ode. Singularly enough, Pope wrote only one such ode—"To Solitude"⁷⁷—despite his indebtedness to Horace and his readiness to use "the Roman poet as his canvas."⁷⁸ Though the

⁷³ For the poems of Swift, see Chalmers, Vol. XI

⁷⁴ "Dryden, on perusing these verses, is reported to have said 'Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet' However, the fact turned out far otherwise, for though he never afterward attempted the heroic or the Pindaric, perhaps there are few poets in the language whose sense is more compact, and who use so few expletives" *Memoirs of Samuel Foote, Esq.*, edited by William Cooke (London, 1805), III, 84. See also *Swift, or the Egotist*, by Mario M. Rossi and J. M. Hone (New York, 1934), pp. 76-78.

⁷⁵ *The Mind and Art of Jonathan Swift*, by Ricardo Quintana (London, 1936), pp. 35-39.

⁷⁶ "The Battle of the Books," in *Prose Works of Jonathan Swift*, edited by W. H. Lecky, I, 173.

⁷⁷ For Pope's verse, see *The Works of Alexander Pope* (Edinburgh, 1764), especially Vol. I.

⁷⁸ See also the pertinent *L'Influence française dans l'Œuvre de Pope*, by E. Audra (Paris, 1931).

form we now have is of a later date,⁷⁹ this ode was a product of Pope's early youth, when he was studying "figures, accident and the first part of the grammar."⁸⁰ It is, formally regarded, a variation of the Horatian Sapphic and unquestionably one of the most distinguished "little odes" of the period. Though it stresses the typical, the general, rather than the concrete and the metaphorical, it escapes being sententious by reason of the poet's delight in a personal mood. There is nothing like it in the verse of Swift, who wrote only a single lyric piece one cares to remember—the imitation of the renowned final stanzas of the *Carmen ad Lolium*.⁸¹

Pope's initial version of the *Dunciad* appeared during 1728; and its exposition of literary follies marks a point midway between the death of Dryden and a new upsurge of the lyric spirit during the middle forties. The book was an attack upon much that is associated with the Pindarick, and may justify the remark here that irregular odes were written at least occasionally by poets who adopted the current literary styles. There is no reason why the present treatise should attempt to name them all. Ambrose Philips, one of the earlier translators of Pindar—his success was not notable, though Dr. Johnson's⁸² remark that "he will be allowed, if he has less fire, to have more smoke" than Pindar was deficient in the milk of human kindness—was known as "Namby-Pamby." The title could have been conferred by Pope, who was waspish but seldom stung without reason or precision. Nevertheless, Philips' "On the Death of the Right Honourable William Earl Cooper" is the neatest Pindarick⁸³ of the century before Collins and Gray, and (could one be interested in the subject) not a disagreeable poem. It is quite without dictional distinc-

⁷⁹ See *The Early Career of Alexander Pope*, by George Sherburn (Oxford, 1934), p. 84.

⁸⁰ *Observations on Men and Books*, by Joseph Spence (London, 1820), p. 12.

⁸¹ Goad, *Horace in the English Literature of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 179.

⁸² *Lives of the Poets*, VI, 50.

⁸³ For the poems of Philips, see Chalmers, Vol. XIII.

tion, but the stanzas conform, the rhythm (mingled trochees and iambs) is interesting though nothing more, and the philosophy is decent.

By all odds the finest isolated Pindarick of the period was John Dyer's "Grongar Hill," first published as an irregular ode.⁸⁴ A revised version issued during the same year (1726) gave the poem a sprightlier trochaic form; but it seems to me indubitable that, despite a few blemishes and some slowness of movement, the first version is the better one. "Grongar Hill" is of great significance from two points of view. First, Dyer's revision indicates the extent to which the traditional Pindarick had lost caste. In an essay on the poem, John Scott⁸⁵ wrote: "Few readers are perhaps apprized that Grongar Hill was originally written, and even printed as an irregular ode . . . very incorrect." That was certainly the prevailing view. But a modern reader, aware that Dyer is a forerunner of Wordsworth, can only quote with genuine regret these lines from the first draught:

Each watery face bears pictured woods and skies,
Where, as the surface curls, when breezes rise,
Faint fairy earthquake trembles to the eyes.⁸⁶

A comparison is suggested, on the basis of observation of nature, with these lines from a later and inferior poem, James Grainger's "Solitude":

You catch the distant shepherd's song,
Or brush from herbs the pearly dew,
Or the rising primrose view.

We may now turn to the second point raised by "Grongar Hill"—the pictorial character of the poem. The relationship between the ode and the painter's art had long been close, as

⁸⁴ For the poems of Dyer, see Chalmers, Vol. XIII

⁸⁵ *Critical Essays*, p. 99.

⁸⁶ The first version appeared in *Miscellaneous Poems*, edited by R. Savage (London, 1726), the second in *Miscellaneous Poems*, edited by D. Lewis (1726). See also *A Survey of English Literature 1730-1780*, by Oliver Elton (New York, 1928), II, 6-7, by which my attention was called to the lines cited.

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has been noted in discussing Milton, Cowley, Dryden, and others. Dyer was not only a painter, but had traveled widely and been one of the first English poets to succumb to the charms of Swiss scenery. The Alpine landscape, where unspoiled mountaineers then herded their flocks in valleys surmounted by snow-capped crags and picturesque ruins, may well have played an important part in the making of the Romantic movement. At any rate, Dyer's poem gave expression to a new naturalism of impression and picture which was destined soon to supplant the baroque and rococo styles. That this naturalism automatically suggested new cadences of language seems obvious, though the manner in which it did so must remain a mystery.

Summarizing the discussion of early eighteenth-century Pindarists and their foes, one may say that the issue was first of all between "lucidity" and "turgidity," between rhetoric conceived of as the learned enrichment of utterance and rhetoric viewed as the science of simplifying relationships between the maker of discourse and his audience. This struggle was fought out in pretty much the same way throughout Europe. The irregular ode assumed a recondite, philosophic character.⁸⁷ But in England as elsewhere certain forms derivative from that ode proved temporarily very popular, and with these we shall now be concerned.

The story of the "cantata ode" begins with the Cecilian performances alluded to in the preceding chapter. An ode in honor of the Saint and of music was an annual event, and Addison,⁸⁸ Congreve,⁸⁹ and Pope among others⁹⁰ wrote lyrics

⁸⁷ See Viëtor, *Geschichte der deutschen Ode*, *passim*. A typical phenomenon was the translation of Young's *Night Thoughts* as a series of irregular odes in *Vérités philosophiques, tirées des Nuits d'Young*, by M. de M*** (Paris, 1770).

⁸⁸ Chalmers, IX, 370. Purcell wrote the music for this ode, which was performed in 1699. It has a "chorus" and a "grand chorus." See also Addison's "A Song, for St. Cecilia's Day, at Oxford," with one "chorus," *ibid.*, p. 528.

⁸⁹ Chalmers, X, 281. Congreve's ode is the most melancholy of the Cecilian odes. Whether this mood was suggested by the composer, John Eccles, cannot be ascertained.

⁹⁰ See, in general, Husk, *An Account of the Musical Celebrations of St. Ce-*

for the occasion. A really good libretto could hardly be pieced out among them, but Pope's contribution ⁹¹ is worth studying as an illustration of the hiatus that now loomed between poetry and song. We see the poet making due provision for the blare of trumpets and the inevitable sequential decline in the supply of trumpeter's breath:

Hark! the numbers soft and clear
Gently steal upon the ear;
Now louder, and yet louder rise,
And fill with spreading sounds the skies;
Exulting in triumph, now swell the bold notes,
In broken air trembling, the wild music floats;
Till, by degrees, remote and small
The strains decay,
And melt away,
In a dying, dying fall.

The librettist moralizes even to the accompaniment of the symphony:

Sloth unfolds her arms and wakes,
Listening Envy drops her snakes;
Intestine war no more our passions wage,
And giddy factions hear away their rage.

For variety's sake, the specters dance, Eurydice is rescued from Proserpine, and "divine Cecilia" sings a soul into Heaven. It is not difficult to imagine Byrd's bewilderment had he been privileged to witness so diversified a performance.⁹²

cilia's Day Yalden wrote the ode for 1693. He tested the composer's ingenuity by presenting him with several hexameter lines (Chalmers, XI, 71). Hughes's version of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" was, so the *Tatler* (No. 156) states, set to music by Clayton in a manner which disillusioned the poet. Oldham's offering can be found in *Poems by Several Hands and on Several Occasions*, collected by N. Tate (London, 1685), p. 373.

⁹¹ *Works*, I, 67. It is easy to see how the trochaic dimeter catalectic lines in stanzas 4 and 5 were written to order. The date is 1708.

⁹² Mackail, *Studies of English Poets*, p. 65, thinks that Thomas Warton was "justified in saying that parts of it 'have much the air of a drinking-song at a county election'." The poem was later altered by Pope to meet the requirements of a new composer, Maurice Greene. See Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, II, 879-83. Hawkins prints the music.

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Pope was sufficiently apologetic concerning the poem, which he declared had been written at Steele's request.⁹³ Addison appears to have taken his Cecilian ode more seriously, and the *Tatler* speaks of the practice with respect.⁹⁴ Soon Pope was having his fling at the idea; but a critical line in the first edition of the *Dunciad*⁹⁵ was later suppressed:

Hence the soft sing song on Cecilia's day.

Swift also had his fling,⁹⁶ in a "Cantata" which doubtless conveys a realistic impression of the "harmony ode" performances:

Now slowly move your fiddle-stick
Now tantan, tantantivi, quick;
Now trembling, shivering, quivering, quaking,
Set hoping hearts of lovers aching.
Fly, fly, above the sky.
Rambling, gambling, trolloping, lolloping, galloping,
Now sweep, sweep the deep,
See Celia, Celia dies,
While true lovers' eyes
Weeping sleep, sleeping weep,
Weeping sleep, bo peep, bo peep.

The Cecilian ode survived this attack and many less brilliant assaults to succumb ultimately to Bonnel Thornton, Esq., whose "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day" was published in the Supplement to Dodsley's *Collection* during 1767.⁹⁷ The final recitative may be a brilliant satire on instrumental innovations:

⁹³ Spence, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁹⁴ See the advertisement in the *Tatler*, No 215 "Yesterday (November 22, 1700), St. Cecilia's feast was kept at Stationers-hall, where there was a very fine entertainment of music, both there, and at St Bride's Church."

⁹⁵ Chalmers, XII, 304.

⁹⁶ Chalmers, XI, 462 Chalmers has a note quoting Dr. Beattie's disapproval of the Dean's harsh and unfeeling critique.

⁹⁷ "An Ode on St. Cecilia's Day Adapted to the Ancient British Music, viz, the Salt-box, the Jew's Harp, the Marrow-bones and Cleavers, the Humstrum or Hurdy-gurdy, etc, as It Was Performed on June 10 at Ranleagh By Bonnel Thornton, Esq" In *A Collection of the Most Esteemed Pieces of Poetry*, etc (London, 1747), p. 134

Now to Caecilia, heavenly maid,
Your loud united voices raise,
With solemn hymns to celebrate her praise.
Each instrument shall lend its aid,
The salt-box with clattering and clapping shall sound,
The iron lyre
Buzzing twang with wav'ring wire,
With heavy hum
The sober hurdy-gurdy thrum,
And the merry merry marrow-bones ring round.

This barrage no literary form could be expected to survive. Still the practice of annual foregathering in honor of music and its patroness must have been, all things considered, an amiable practice.

✓ A comparable fate ultimately overtook the birthday ode, though the Poets Laureate were a sturdy race and the kings (or queens) insistent. The specimens surviving from Dryden's time are interesting, primarily because Purcell was then experimenting in the form.⁹⁸ Soon, however, the measure of charm the species had exuded was fully spent. Laurence Eusden may have basked in the royal favor, but among other poets he virtually ran the gantlet;⁹⁹ and for poor Colley Cibber,¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *The Works of Henry Purcell*, Vol. X (London, 1902). The setting for this ode is in six parts—trumpet, hautbois, 1st viol, 2d viol, viola, basso. The orchestration (four pages) is in common time and in the key of C. The singing begins in $\frac{3}{4}$ time, the voices being designated as canto 1, canto 2, alto, tenor, basso, and basso continuo. There is a quite considerable amount of repetition, but the orchestration is varied. Note in the same volume, the "Commemoration Ode," performed at Christ Church, Dublin, on January 8, 1694. Here the orchestral prelude is written in four parts. The singing begins in four parts, to be interrupted by an alto solo. There is frequent variation of the key and the time. It seems that the viola accompanied the basso, while the tenor was sustained by the piccolo or the flute.

⁹⁹ Laurence Eusden died in 1730. The event is remembered chiefly because of Richard Savage's unsuccessful attempt to get the post. Thereupon he penned "The Volunteer Laureat: An Ode on Her Majesty's Birthday," which had at least the merit of pleasing the recipient, who paid fifty pounds for the flattery and promised an equal sum annually. The poem is in Chalmers, XI, 324.

¹⁰⁰ *The Life and Times of Colley Cibber*, by Dorothy Senior (New York, n.d.). This cites (p. 171) Gay's amusing "Ode for the New Year," ridiculing Cibber, and quotes Fielding's "Pasquin" (p. 116). Goad, *op. cit.*, p. 192, cites

his successor, matters were far worse. Nothing, literally nothing, could have surpassed the banality of their birthday and New Year odes. Between snatches of invective in the *Dunciad*, Pope shed light on the manner in which these tributes to royalty were rehearsed and performed.¹⁰¹ The rehearsing appears to have been done in some tavern—Pope mentions the Devil Tavern, in Fleet Street—and the rendition took place wherever the Court happened to be convened. It is impossible to review here the endless succession of birthday odes in the cantata form.¹⁰² Nor was the natal morn the sole occasion on which such lyric offerings were deemed appropriate. Thus Christopher Pitt wrote an "Ode on the Approaching Delivery of Her Royal Highness," which, it seems, was set to music.¹⁰³ Naturally vengeance was sudden and signal, with Swift taking the honors in "Directions for Making a Birthday Song."¹⁰⁴ More striking, however, is the point noted by David Nichol Smith¹⁰⁵—the anticipation of Cibber's birthday ode of 1743 in this Swiftian line:

Hesse Darmstadt makes too rough a line

Incredibly enough, Cibber actually wrote:

Fielding's lampoon of Cibber, claiming that Horace was wrong in saying that genius needs improvement Cf also *The Gentleman's Magazine*, II (Jan., 1732), 580

¹⁰¹ For his quatrain on Cibber, see Chalmers, XII, 306 For the rest, see pp 305-14 Pope contends that the words of the odes are "happily drowned out in the voices and the instruments"

¹⁰² Quantities of them may be extracted from the files of the *Gentleman's Magazine*

¹⁰³ Chalmers, XII, 372

¹⁰⁴ The poet was never bolder, as the following lines indicate

Supposing now your song is done,
To mynheer Handel next you run,
Who artfully will pare and prune
Your words to some Italian tune
Then print it in the largest letter,
With capitals, the more the better.
Present it boldly on your knee,
And take a guinea for your fee

¹⁰⁵ *The Letters of Jonathan Swift to Charles Ford*, edited by David Nichol Smith (Oxford, 1934), p 303

Tho' rough *Seligenstadt*
The harmony defeat,
Tho' *Klein Ostein*
The verse confound,
Yet, in the joyful strain,
Aschaffenburg and *Dettingen*
Shall charm the ear they seem to wound.

Other writers took up the scent, and a conservative estimate of the number of parodies and diatribes addressed to Cibber would run into the hundreds. Fielding was acrid. A more appealing and benevolent note was sounded by Isaac Hawkins Browne, whose *A Pipe of Tobacco* was issued in 1736.¹⁰⁶ Here, at the Poet Laureate's expense, the cantata parody was all the more deadly for being urbane. This quality will become obvious if one contrasts the burlesque version of Cibber which appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January, 1732, in which the insults are as plentiful as the notes of true humor are rare.¹⁰⁷ But nothing could slay a Laureate of the Augustan century except physical death; and it was only the merciful conspiracy of time and fortune which brought some improvement with Whitehead and Warton. It may be added that the official cantata also figures in American history, as witness the "Ode to the President of the United States on His Arrival in Boston," composed to honor Washington.¹⁰⁸

Diverted to other uses, the cantata form occasionally produced a charming libretto. Its first and by all odds most assiduous general practitioner was John Hughes, previously mentioned, whose gentle spirit left an equally gentle trace on the pages of the *Spectator*. He sounded almost all the notes in

¹⁰⁶ Edited by H. F. B. Brett-Smith (Oxford, 1922)

¹⁰⁷ *Vide supra*, p. 174. For other examples, see *English Burlesque Poetry, 1700-1750*, by Richmond P. Bond (Cambridge, Mass., 1932), the extensive bibliographies in which also include this item

¹⁰⁸ Boston, 1789. The final recitative reads

Behold the man! whom virtues raise
The highest of the patriot throng!
To him the muse her homage pays
And tunes the gratulatory song

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the lyric octave, doing neat versions of Horace and Anacreon,¹⁰⁹ trying his hand at the Pindarick,¹¹⁰ and writing a masque in which Daphne sang very pathetically as she was transformed into a laurel tree. The cantata was, however, his stock-in-trade. *Six Cantatas, or Poems for Music, after the Manner of the Italians*¹¹¹ has an interesting Preface setting forth what the author had learned from Pepusch concerning the Italian use of the form and explaining the method of rendition. Hughes defends the "recitative," saying that it should be delivered with a "kind of improved elocution or pronouncing the words in musical cadences." The idea caught fire, and a considerable number of other composers—D. Purcell, Haym, Galliard, and even Handel among them—wrote accompaniments for Hughes's cantatas. But though one or the other may be charming enough as a musical composition (for example, the "Ode for Vocal and Instrumental Music" dedicated to the memory of the Duke of Devonshire), they are practically worthless as lyrics.

It was probably inevitable that poems written from music of such a kind should fall flat. Among the very few which can now be read with pleasure is (some would also except this or that ditty in Henry Carey's *Poems*)¹¹² the "Ode for Music" included by William Melmoth in his *Letters of Thomas Fitzosborne*.¹¹³ It is amiably pretty, though by no means stirring. Next to it I should put "Love and Chastity," an artificial pastoral cantata by John Cunningham,¹¹⁴ the trochaic airs in which

¹⁰⁹ He has a very good version of Anacreon, Ode III, in Chalmers, X, 19

¹¹⁰ "The House of Nassau A Pindaric Ode 1702" (Chalmers, X, 15) has these characteristic lines

Here pause, my Muse! and wind up higher
The strings of thy Pindaric lyre

¹¹¹ Chalmers, X, 30-36.

¹¹² *Poems*, by Henry Carey, edited by F. T. Wood (London, n. d.).

¹¹³ *The Letters of Sir Thomas Fitzosborne* [by William Melmoth] (London, 1750), p. 157. The poem, which honors the author's wife, is thus introduced "It was not, you are to suppose, without first having invoked the Genius of the place, and called upon the Muses in due form, that I broke out into the following rhapsody"

¹¹⁴ Chalmers, XIV, 451.

are relatively melodious. Christopher Smart's "The Widow's Resolution" ¹¹⁵ has a trace of minor Elizabethanism, but the poem is devoid of serious intent and is therefore dubbed a "ballad." Gay produced an amended version of the cantata ¹¹⁶ which he dubbed the "serenata," and filled his choruses and airs with idle pastoral chatter in honor of "Acis and Galatea." Richard Jago ¹¹⁷ and Henry Brooke ¹¹⁸ went still farther afield and wrote "oratorios." Goldsmith altered the method of procedure in his "Threnodia Augustalis," ¹¹⁹ which he defended on the ground that it had been written in two days. William Falconer's "Ode on the Duke of York's Second Departure from England" is just a Pindarick each stanza of which is followed by a chorus. ¹²⁰ Again the satirists had their fun, thus conferring on the genus an immortality to which it might not have attained otherwise. Thus the author of *A New Historical, Political, Satyrical BURLESQUE ODE* ¹²¹ set the various portions of his effusion to ballad tunes. Shenstone, in one of the most delightful of his poems, ¹²² burlesqued the form in an

¹¹⁵ For Smart's poems, see *ibid*, Vol. XVI This cantata, despite its recitatives and airs, is called "Ballad XV"

¹¹⁶ *Ibid*, X, 496 Handel wrote the music for this lyric See Hawkins, *op cit*, II, 860

¹¹⁷ "Adam, or the Fatal Disobedience," Chalmers, XVII, 319

¹¹⁸ "Ruth," *ibid*, XVII, 421

¹¹⁹ Chalmers, XVI, 509 The poem is divided into two parts, the first of which opens with an "Overture—A solemn Dirge," while the second commences with "Overture—Pastorale" Goldsmith speaks of the music as "prepared and adapted by Signor Vento"

¹²⁰ *The Poetical Works of William Falconer* (London, n d), p 84

¹²¹ London, 1757 The tunes include "There Was an Old Woman Liv'd on the Moor," and "Chevy Chase" The author, satirizing the Secret Expedition, sets these words to the tune of "Ketty beautiful and young"

There was an old Man had a House

A very fine House had he,

As fine a place as ever was,

Or is in G——y

Some scurvy Frenchmen came that Way,

Who full of Wrath and Ire,

Declar'd they'd plunder all his Land,

And set his House on Fire

¹²² Chalmers, XIII, 306 The "Doctor's Solo" runs as follows

Hear but this strain—'twas made by Handel,

A wight of skill and judgment deep!

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hymnodists, whose place in the history of the ode is important though (I must confess) difficult to define.¹²⁷ It may be observed at the outset that while the religious Pindarists never conceded defeat, the influence of the Psalmist was for ideological and artistic reasons best discernible in hymnody. This was, as a matter of fact, a relatively new development. For a number of generations, the Psalms themselves had been considered the only poems to which a place could rightly be accorded in Divine worship. Though High Anglicans like Herbert had dissented, the weight of public opinion was clearly on the other side. For Puritans even the music traditionally associated with the Psalms was suspect; and the eighteenth century saw a number of books which attempted to prove either that singing was permissible or that the traditional English melodies were legitimately descended from ancient Hebrew tunes. Thus the author of *The Temple Musick*, Arthur Bedford,¹²⁸ wrote to show that the music used in English cathedrals was not only "conformable" to the singing of the "Primitive Christians" but essentially similar to the music in vogue before the "Babylonish Captivity."

One of the earlier and more influential Protestant hymn writers was Elizabeth Rowe, whose religious lyrics were popu-

¹²⁷ On the general subject, see *Handbook of the Hymnal*, by William Chalmers Covert and Calvin Weiss Laufer (Philadelphia, 1935) and the accompanying *Hymnal* (1937), *The Hymn in History and Literature*, by Jeremiah Bascom Reeves (New York, 1924), which comments (pp 204 ff) on Pope, and *The Story of Sacred Song*, by William C Proctor (London, n d), with comment (pp 74 ff) on the *Olney Hymns*. Six-line stanzas in translations from the Psalms are found as far back as Francis Davison. Examples of the six-line stanza, either in the basic 43443 form or in variants, would include Watts's "The Incomprehensible" (Chalmers, XIII, 25), "Morning," by Charles Wesley; and "Recessional," by Rudyard Kipling. *Funeral Hymns* (Bristol, 1769) contains a number of poems in the stanza. The tradition of the sacred ode appears to have lingered for a long while, as witness *A Gospel Ode*, by F A Boyd (Kentucky, n d). It is a sequence of very poor quatrains.

¹²⁸ London, 1706. The complete title is illuminating: *The Temple Musick or an Essay concerning the Method of Singing the Psalms of David in the Temple before the Babylonish Captivity Wherein, The Musick of Our Cathedrals I Vindicated, and Supposed to Be Conformable, Not Only to That of the Primitive Christians, But Also to the Practice of the Church in All Preceding Ages*.

lar in England and abroad.¹²⁹ Her influence on Pietistic Germany was especially large. Catholics, too, had their *Primer or Office of the B. Virgin Mary*,¹³⁰ the translations used in which have in part been associated with the name of Dryden.¹³¹ A new impetus was given to the art of hymn writing by the emphasis placed by critics on the "sacred ode" as one of the basic types of ode. Watts' Preface¹³² to *Horae Lyricae* reflects this trend clearly. He is anxious to counteract the effect of the "impure sonnets" and "scurrilous pens" of the time. David is to him the author of "songs, that were made for the harp, or (which is all one) his Lyric odes." Concerning his own work, he says: "In the First Book are many odes which were written to assist the meditations and worship of vulgar Christians, and with a design to be published in the volume of Hymns . . . but upon the Review, I found some expressions that were not suited to the plainest capacity." It would seem from these remarks that Watts, while careless of nice academic distinctions, was following the recognized critics of the time and seeking to produce what they termed the "sacred ode." For this endeavor he was roundly trounced by sterner theologians. William Romaine¹³³ was particularly severe: "My concern is to see Christian congregations shut out divinely inspired psalms, and take in Dr. Watts' flights of fancy, as if the words of a poet were better than the words of a prophet, or as if the wit of a man were to be preferred to the wisdom of God."

But where was the point at which hymn and ode parted company? Dr. Watts did not say, nor were others more specific. Addison's "The Spacious Firmament on High" was first published in the *Spectator*¹³⁴ and there called an ode. It was also

¹²⁹ *Vide supra*, p. 130.

¹³⁰ "New and Revised," London, 1706.

¹³¹ See *Hymns Attributed to John Dryden*, edited by George Rapall Noyes and George Reuben Potter.

¹³² This is in Chalmers, XIII, 13-20.

¹³³ *An Essay on Psalmody* [by William Romaine] (London, 1775), p. 113.

¹³⁴ *Spectator*, No. 465.

commonly referred to as a "hymn"; and since it happened to be—like very many similar poems—a paraphrase of a Psalm, it was often called a "psalm."¹³⁵ The composers who set it to music do not concur, Dr. Greene calling it a "sacred ode"¹³⁶ and others treating it as if it were a hymn. But as a matter of fact there did exist during the eighteenth century a hymn-book distinction between the various forms. Thus *A Companion to the Magdalen Chapel*¹³⁷ lists "Hymns, Psalms, Odes and Anthems," giving Addison's poem as a "Psalm." It is difficult to believe that any effort was made to approximate to ancient liturgical practice, still maintained in our day by the Greek Church, which sets aside the ode as a special form of chant.¹³⁸ Far more probably the composer was the person who fixed the title, applying the term "ode" to religious compositions modeled on the elaborate music of Purcell and Blow. If Addison was writing with such an accompaniment in mind, it would have been natural for him to use the appropriate word. On the other hand, the fact that his paraphrase¹³⁹ was not in the common meter, utilized, for example, by Brady and Tate in their version of the Psalms,¹⁴⁰ may have been decisive. In this case the word "ode" would have stood for greater distinction of form and craftsmanship.

¹³⁵ "The eighteenth century was constantly occupied with the study and versification of the Psalms." *The Age of Johnson*, by Thomas Seccombe (London, 1909), p. 259.

¹³⁶ In *A Miscellany of Lyric Poems* (London, 1740) See Hamilton, *The Pindaric Ode*, p. 38.

¹³⁷ *A Companion to the Magdalen Chapel Containing the Hymns Psalms Odes and Anthems Used There, etc., The Music Compos'd by the Most Eminent Masters* (London, n. d.). Addison's poem is here presented both as "Psalm XIX" (p. 111), with "Music by Mr. Selby," and as a "Hymn" (p. 4) Nowadays it is most frequently sung to the music of the Creation song from Handel's *Creation*. The "ode" in the *Companion* is a lyric which begins, "Grateful notes and numbers bring" (p. 37) It has a quite elaborate set of choruses. Two other odes—"Ode to Morning" (p. 52) and "Ode to Pitty" (p. 56) are set as hymns.

¹³⁸ For the various terms, see the dictionaries of music by Grove and Pulver. See also *Notes and Queries*, Second Series, XII, 90 (1861) Concerning Handel's composition of anthems, which doubtless set the tone, see Hawkins, *op. cit.*, II, 460.

¹³⁹ Addison's stanza is, of course, one of eight lines, iambic tetrameter, rhyming couplet wise.

¹⁴⁰ *The Psalms in Metre* (London, 1696). This became the most popular of all versions, being printed with the Book of Common Prayer.

Kindred questions arise concerning Pope's "Dying Christian to His Soul." The form obviously suggests the Cecilian ode. But just what purpose the author had in mind or what model he followed (in short, what made him expire so freely) is a matter for conjecture. I believe he was thinking of a poem to be written for an elaborate musical setting. Nevertheless the ode also illustrates the impact of the hymn on lyric feeling in Pope's time. The stanza is a variant of the "romance six" measure, to borrow a phrase from Saintsbury, though it is irregularly treated as if to accompany the changing moods of choral music. Pope used this measure only one other time, and that contemptuously in "Phryne."¹⁴¹ And I think the form was destined to play so large a role in later ode writing not because of the seventeenth-century song tradition, but because—being looked upon as a variant of the "common measure"—it was a standard form in hymnody. For example, who does not immediately sense the close relationship between Collins' "Ode to Peace" and a hymn like Dryden's version of the *Veni, Creator* or Milton's translation of the Seventh Psalm? Tillotson has pointed once more to the naturalness with which Pope fell into the hymn tune in the "Prayer" appended to the *Essay on Man*. It would be rash to draw too impressive a conclusion from these observations. But I think one may safely hold that the ties between the formal lyric and the hymn were closer in the eighteenth century than those between that lyric and the ancient song.

Illustrations abound, but two are of signal importance to the present discussion. There are passages of great beauty in nearly everything Christopher Smart wrote, with the exception of his shorter and occasional odes,¹⁴² which have all the faults of the period and few of its virtues. The version of the Psalms he had planned promised to be exceedingly good, and the theological "Essays" come near to being the best blank verse

¹⁴¹ *On the Poetry of Pope*, by Geoffrey Tillotson (Oxford, 1938), pp. 104 ff.

¹⁴² As, for example, "The Pretty Chambermaid."

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of the century.¹⁴³ But the "Song to David" ¹⁴⁴ is so incredibly much better than his other poems that one half believes he was mad when he wrote it. It is not strange that such a masterpiece should have stirred writers as diverse as Mary Russell Mitford ¹⁴⁵ and Robert Browning.¹⁴⁶ Seldom if ever (perhaps in Father Hopkins' "Wreck of the Eurydice") has the religious ode risen to such heights in English. Glancing at any single stanza, however, one is startled by the simplicity of the underlying prosodic mechanism. The old six-line hymn stanza is here transformed into something more than itself:

Strong is the lion—like a coal
His eye-ball,—like a bastion's mole
His chest against the foes:
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail,
Strong against tide th' enormous whale
Emerges as he goes.

What has happened prosodically is probably that the initial inversion of the four-foot lines gives the three-foot lines their great vigor and speed. The only comparable treatment I have noticed is Crashaw's in "Vexilla Regis." Compare a stanza from Shenstone's "Ode Written 1739":

Thus airy Strephon tun'd his lyre—
He scorned the pangs of wild desire,
Which lovesick swains endure,
Resolv'd to brave the keenest dart,
Since frowns could never wound the heart,
And smiles must ever cure ¹⁴⁷

That is tolerable, of course. But Smart's poem is masterly, revealing also the concern with Miltonic Scriptural epithet. It

¹⁴³ For example, *On the Eternity of the Supreme Being, a Poetical Essay* (Cambridge, 1750)

¹⁴⁴ *Song to David*, by Christopher Smart, reproduced from the original edition (Oxford, 1926) Text in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*, p. 538

¹⁴⁵ *Recollections of a Literary Life*, by Mary Russell Mitford (New York, 1852), p. 124 "Devotional poetry has nothing grander even in Milton."

¹⁴⁶ "With Christopher Smart," in *Parleyings with Certain People of Importance* See *Browning's Parleyings*, by William Clyde De Vane, Jr. (New Haven, 1927), pp. 92-133

¹⁴⁷ Chalmers, XIV, 146

is close to the Psalms, but one cannot help feeling that the rhythm owes much to Pindarick practice.

The second instance is that of William Blake, who bridged the centuries. It is curious enough that a poet who must have read Collins and Gray should have termed none of his poems an ode.¹⁴⁸ But he was obviously inspired by Elizabethan lyrics and by versions of the Psalms. Very significant, however, is the fact that he set his *Songs* to music. That indicates both the influence of a deeply religious, hymn-singing environment, and the effect of reading habits formed not in accordance with a pedagogical routine but only in obedience to the dictates of a spiritually orientated imagination. On what better note could one close this chapter? The coming of Smart¹⁴⁹ and Blake indicated that the central rationalistic purpose of the Augustan period had failed of achievement, though the poetic material and aims of the age that would follow it were to differ radically from those of the age which had preceded it.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ *The Life of William Blake*, by Mona Wilson (New York, 1933), pp 13-37, and *William Blake*, by Osbert Burdett (New York, 1926), pp 9-18 I have used the bibliography given by Burdett, with some additions

¹⁴⁹ *Rejoice in the Lamb*, by Christopher Smart, edited by William Force Stead (New York, 1939), presents a hitherto unpublished poem by Smart and supplies an excellent critical commentary The poem may be looked upon as a kind of preliminary sketch for the "Song of David" and is rich in testimony to Smart's fondness for Old Testament rhythms

¹⁵⁰ Many authors and titles have been omitted from this survey A few may be mentioned here, for reasons which will be indicated briefly *Poems on Several Occasions*, by Joseph Mitchell (London, 1729), has been trenchantly analyzed by Fairchild (*op cit*, pp 412 ff) His "Ode on the Power of Muzick" reechoes the enthusiasm of Aaron Hill Dorothy Brewster, in *Aaron Hill Poet, Dramatist, Projector* (New York, 1913), quotes Thomson's remark that Mitchell was a "planet-blasted fool" The reader of his verse is likely to agree to the noun *A Collection of Poems*, by John Whaley (London, 1732), contains an "Ode on the Fifth of November," moderately Pindarick Whaley was a Cambridge fellow, and his verse is of some interest for that reason Other odes of a measure of interest include "Almahide. An Ode," by Henry St John, in *The Poetical Works of Philip Late Duke of Wharton* (London, n d), II, 116 In sixteen stanzas the author discusses the sorry state into which poetry has fallen, praises Garth and Granville, and jibes at religion. "To the Reverend Mr H—ck," in *Ballads and Other Occasional Poems*, by WT in the Marchalsea [by William Tunstall] (London, 1716) The author (p 26) discusses Cowley as the discoverer of "Pinder" *An Ode to Mankind, Address'd to the Prince of Wales* (London 1741) is an instance of the ode which combines the Pindarick form with blank verse.

CHAPTER SEVEN: *Collins, Gray, and the Return of the Imagination*

THE FIFTH DECADE of the eighteenth century was a notable one in the annals of English verse. In several ways, this efflorescence of poetic energy in song and ode is comparable to the achievement of a hundred years previous, though few might wish to place the two periods on a plane of relative equality.¹ The years between 1744 and 1749 witnessed the publication of odes by Collins,² Akenside,³ Joseph Warton,⁴ and Gray;⁵ of Dodsley's *Miscellanies*; of verse by Blacklock⁶ and Thomson;⁷ and of definitive translations of Pindar and Horace.⁸ Quite as important is the fact that Percy's *Reliques* was in the making. None of the poets named was merely doing what his predecessors had done. A new tide of feeling, as diverse as the feeling for words that haunted Keats and the feeling for religious awe that inspired Wesley, did not, it is true, bring many new lyric forms ashore. But it loosened, refashioned, and sometimes burst asunder the forms devised by previous generations. The universities were

¹ See Secombe, *The Age of Johnson*, p. 222, and *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, by Edmund Gosse (London, n. d.), *passim*.

² *Odes*, by William Collins. The volume bears the date "1747," but was actually issued in 1746.

³ *Odes on Several Subjects*, by Mark Akenside (London, 1747).

⁴ *Odes*, by Joseph Warton (London, 1746).

⁵ *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, 1747.

⁶ *Poems*, by Thomas Blacklock, 1746.

⁷ *Poems on Several Occasions*, 1748. The descriptive poems—his best work—had of course been published earlier.

⁸ *Odes, Epistles and Carmen Seculare*, translated by Philip Francis, 1743. West's *Pindar* (*vide supra*, p. 147) was issued in 1749.

once again centers of literary activity, and many writers were deeply indebted to them.⁹ Years of calm had sobered and steadied the academic mind; and though this may have been dull-witted enough to deserve the strictures voiced by not a few of the illustrious, it did provide the scaffolding upon which men eager to hammer at the rock of truth or beauty could take their stand. It is after all not a coincidence that Samuel Johnson could make a living translating from the French, writing about Macbeth, and planning a dictionary.

If we are to understand the development of the ode during this period, it is necessary to bear in mind first of all that with the heightening of interest in older poets (as in antiquities generally) there had gone hand in hand a steadily increasing fondness for Renaissance stanzaic forms. Spenserian and Miltonic¹⁰ patterns were especial favorites. The reader must turn to Schipper¹¹ for some comparative analysis of these and other stanzas. Here one can only observe that the impulses which guided the poets were diverse and complex. Something will be said later concerning the underlying critical and creative attitudes. Of immediate concern are three important moments in the history of the form. First, there was the impact of the Horatian example, which the century as a whole accepted as a standard of excellence. Many of the newer six- or eight-line ode stanzas had simply grown out of the Horatian models. Thus Thomas Tickell had employed, for his patriotic odes, an eight-line stanza with four-foot lines that rhymed by couplets.¹² William Walsh¹³ had been closer to the seventeenth century, both in form and theory. He opined that "if love-

⁹ Evidence on this point may be garnered, I think, from the files of the *Student*, which became *The Oxford Monthly Miscellany*

¹⁰ For a survey of the Miltonic influence, see Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry*, *passim*

¹¹ *Vide supra*, p. 11. Schipper's analysis is by no means exhaustive nor is it in every sense satisfactory. But it is the best available

¹² For example, "An Ode, Occasioned by His Excellency the Earl of Stanhope's Voyage to France, 1718," in Chalmers, XI, 116

¹³ *Ibid.*, VIII, 405.

verses work upon the ladies, a man will not trouble himself with what the critics say of them." But his six-line stanzas are merely elongated quatrains.

Moreover, not a few poets were artificers pure and simple. Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* deeply affected the sentiment of Europe, but it is good that his ode patterns left little trace upon its prosody. "Ocean; an Ode. Concluding with a Wish" ¹⁴ employs as odd a system of metrics as the century knew. The plan of its six-line iambic stanza is 224224, rhyming *aabccb*. A stanza will illustrate:

The main! the main!
Is Britain's reign,
Her strength, her glory, is her fleet,
The main! the main!
Be Briton's strain,
As Triton's strong, as Syren's sweet

There is little likelihood that even Browning could have succeeded with so bizarre a stanza. The motives which underlay Young's choice in this matter have been explained by his contemporary, William Crowe. "Dr. Young admired the following lines in Dryden's Ode,

Assumes the God,
Affects to nod;

of which ode, his opinion was, that 'its chief beauty consists in adapting the numbers most happily to the variety of the occasion;' and that these are chosen to express majesty; he therefore made them his pattern for his ode entitled Ocean; because (he said) 'the subject of it is great.' For the more harmony he chose the frequent return of rhyme." ¹⁵ In short, Young set about writing an ode much as a tailor might undertake the cutting of cloth.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Ibid*, XIII, 403-5

¹⁵ *A Treatise on English Versification*, by William Crowe (London, 1827), p. 292.

¹⁶ Professor H. N. Fairchild calls my attention to the fact that the pattern of "Ocean" is akin to that passage in *Midsummer Night's Dream* which describes the demise of Pyramus and Thisbe

"The antients," he declared in the Preface to this ode, "had a particular regard to the choice of their subjects; which are generally national and great. My subject is, in its own nature, noble; most proper for an Englishman; never more proper than on this occasion; and (what is strange) hitherto unsung." Thus fortified, he believed himself ready to attempt the ode, which in his view was an august undertaking, indeed: "Ode should be peculiar, but not strained; moral, but not flat; natural, but not obvious; delicate, but not affected; noble but not ambitious; full, but not obscure; fiery, but not mad; thick, but not loaded in its numbers, which should be most harmonious, without the least sacrifice of expression, or of sense. Above all, in this, as in every work of genius, somewhat of an original spirit should be, at least, attempted; otherwise the poet, whose character disclaims mediocrity, makes a secondary praise his ultimate ambition; which has something of a contradiction in it." Many poets of that era entertained similar notions of the poetic process, as a consequence of the way in which rhetoric was then understood. But few expressed their convictions in language so reminiscent of Polonius.¹⁷

¹⁷ A comparison is suggested with some stanzas from "The Merchant"

Dare you to sing, ye tinkling train?
 Silence, ye wretched! ye profane!
 Who shackle *prose*, and boast of *absent* gods,
 Who murder thought, and numbers maim,
 Who write Pindarics cold and lame,
 And labor stiff Anacreontic Odes

Ye *lawful* sons of genius, rise!
 Of *genuine* title to the skies,
 Ye *founts* of learning! and ye *mines* of fame!
 You, who file off the mortal part
 Of glowing thought, with Attic art,
 And drink pure thought from Cam's or Isis' stream

I glow, I burn! the numbers pure,
 High-flavour'd, delicate, mature,
 Spontaneous stream from my unlabour'd breast,
 As when full ripen'd teems the vine,
 The generous busts of willing wine
 Distil nectareous from the grape *unprest*

Finally, a trend to trochaic rhythms is to be noted, since these left their mark on the better *libri minores* of the period. Early instances are the shorter odes of Ambrose Philips, rhythmically deft and charming, though they bog down under the weight of sweetish and outmoded epithets. A few lines from "To the Honourable Miss Carteret"—his best and most profusely satirized lyric—may illustrate:

When the meadows next are seen,
Sweet enamel! white and green,
And the year in fresh attire
Welcomes every gay desire,
Blooming on thou shalt appear
More inviting than the year,
Fairer sight than orchard shows,
Which beside a river blows.¹⁸

Trochees virtually clamor for longer stanzas. And after the middle of the century there were few poets who did not indulge in them, often to good advantage.

These and other aspects of poetic history will come to mind as one reads the book with which this chapter may properly begin—*Poems on Several Occasions*, by Thomas Warton (father of two more famous sons), which was issued in 1748, after the author's death.¹⁹ It is a heterogeneous collection of great interest because the manifold literary concerns of an Oxford professor of poetry during the period immediately preceding can be seen reflected there. The poet offers a Pindarick ode, an imitation of Spenser, paraphrases of Horace and of Scriptural passages, epigrams, pastorals, and short odes. All these forms had been tried by major poets, with Prior at the head of the company. So guileless a nosegay, written about the delights of study and of solitude, religious reflection, and fondness for the classical authors, may accordingly seem to indicate that the Oxford course in poetry was unsophisticated

¹⁸ Chalmers, Vol. XIII The poem is burlesqued in *The Pipe of Tobacco*

¹⁹ Facsimile Text Society edition (New York, 1930) The text of the "Ode to Taste," which copies Milton's Pyrrha ode stanza, begins on p. 180.

rather than significant.²⁰ But the book reveals two facts of no slight import: first, that Warton had read widely and ruminated meanwhile; and second, that a new conception of naturalness in feeling and expression was coming to the fore. In other words, like all products of relatively static periods, the book is dominated by patterns of thought and of form; but there is manifest a tendency to soften the molds and, perhaps, to transform them radically.

The tendency thus indicated becomes very pronounced in the work of William Collins,²¹ Oxford man and victim of divers misfortunes. Few volumes can boast of more than two such great lyrics as the "Ode to Evening" and the "Ode, Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746," which seems the finest short ode in the language. Yet Collins' book contains several other remarkably beautiful poems—the moving, elegiac "Ode on the Death of Thomson" and the "Ode to Fear," which suggests Keats despite its erroneous—perhaps intentionally erroneous—use of the Pindaric form;²² the "Ode on the Poetical Character" and the formally disheveled but nevertheless strangely moving "Ode to Liberty," the Second Epode of which seems to mark a point halfway between Marvell and Shelley.²³ All these lyrics reflect very clearly the poet's reading

²⁰ Chalmers (XVIII, 75) says that Warton's verses "acquired no reputation" So far as I know the volume was not reprinted until the edition mentioned above appeared

²¹ *The Poems of Gray and Collins*, edited by Austin Lane Poole (London, 1937) According to William Hymers (*The Poetical Works of William Collins* pp. xxi ff.), the poems eventually included were only a few of those Collins actually wrote Others he cast into the fire

²² The order chosen by the poet is strophe, epode, antistrophe The second is written in quatrains, and it is conceivable that Collins may have believed it more suitable if used to sunder the two irregular portions of the poem It seems to have been suggested by Aeschylus and not by Pindar

²³ Note the theme of these lines

There, happier than in islands blest,
Or bowers by spring or Hebe drest,
The chiefs who fill our Albion's story,
In warlike weeds, retired in glory,
Hear their consorted Druids sing
Their triumphs to the immortal string

of the classics. He himself refers to Alcaeus, Sophocles, Miletus, and Plato. He was, Ainsworth believes,²⁴ indebted to Pindar and "impressed" by the Greek tragedians. Of even greater interest, I think, is Garrod's point²⁵ that the "Ode to Fear" and the "Ode to Pity" celebrate the tragic moods which Aristotle described in the *Poetics*, upon a translation of which Collins was for some time at work.¹ This would account not only for the mention of English dramatists in both poems but also for the pervading didacticism. Aristotelian influence may likewise have suggested the literary doctrine enshrined in the "Ode to Simplicity."²⁶

It is well to note, however, that some of this riches has its parallel in Thomas Warton. In his book one finds the Miltonic Pyrrha ode stanza (used in Collins' "Ode to Evening"), odes to abstract qualities or "passions," recourse to the epithet as a vehicle of color, and emphasis on pensive moods. But Collins does not share Warton's concurrence in the tradition of amorous verse cast in conventional molds,²⁷ and has a totally different attitude towards the Pindarick form. When these resemblances and divergences have been noticed, it is relatively easy to understand Johnson's²⁸ criticism of Collins' style

²⁴ *Poor Collins*, by Edward Gay Ainsworth, Jr (Ithaca, N Y, 1937), pp 119-22

²⁵ *The Poetry of Collins*, by H W Garrod (Warton Lecture, 1928), p 13

²⁶ At least the poem is a tribute to the temperateness (in the Aristotelian sense) of Attic poetry, and of Roman verse of the golden age. The lines,

No more, in hall or bower,
The Passions own thy power,

Love, only Love her forceless numbers mean,
are usually taken to imply criticism of the "Courtly Love" poets, especially of the Provence. The poet states his own doctrine thus.

I only seek to find thy temperate vale,

Where oft my reed might sound

To maids and shepherds round,

And all thy sons, O Nature, learn my tale.

²⁷ Collins' rare love verses—e.g., "To Miss Aurelia C——r"—point toward Mackenzie rather than back to any earlier poet

²⁸ *Lives of the Poets*, VI, 67 Johnson says in part "He affected the obsolete when it was not worthy of revival, and he puts his words out of the common order, seeming to think, with some later candidates for fame, that not to write prose is certainly to write poetry" Inversion was a sore point in criticism during the Age of Johnson.

For this was a poet who used the verse patterns of his time, and to a considerable extent the properties of his time as well, but whose language and spirit were alien. Perhaps one may say with some exaggeration that he grouped the classical figurines of Rome in the attitudes of Greek art;²⁹ and that the act of doing so was, as with Winckelmann or the young Goethe, a "romantic" deed.³⁰ At any rate, the defects of *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects* derive in large measure from the fact that old and new are not perfectly fused in the poet's own mind. Possibly the most obvious fault is that his epithets often seem unsuited to his verse patterns.³¹ If, for example, one strips the following stanza of the "Ode to Peace" of qualifying diction, it becomes the kind of verse which Johnson (or, indeed, his nominal ancestor, Ben Jonson) would have relished:

O Peace, thy robes unbind!
O, leave not one behind
Of all thy train,
The British Lion, sweet,
Lies stretch'd to kiss thy feet,
And own thy reign³²

²⁹ See *Polymetis or, an Enquiry Concerning the Agreement between the Works of the Roman Poets, and the Remains of the Antient Artists*, by [Joseph] Spence (London, 1747). This book may be said to be the high-water mark of classical art feeling. It has (p. 155) a lengthy Pindarick in Spenserian stanzas, "The Choice of Hercules."

³⁰ It is important to note that Collins, like the Germans named, approached the classic world after an imaginative *excursus* into the romance of his own national past. He is traditionally said to have been a great reader of "black letter books." For Goethe the route to Greece and Rome led through Strasbourg.

³¹ A good example is the "Ode on the Poetical Character," though it is in many respects an admirable poem from which Wordsworth and Keats seem to have learned.

³² For convenience's sake, the stanza may be quoted as follows:

O Peace, thy injured robes up-bind!
O rise! and leave not one behind
Of all thy beamy train,
The British Lion, goddess sweet,
Lies stretched on earth to kiss thy feet,
And own thy holier reign

Similar use of epithet is frequent in Warton, too.

When, however, Collins' patterns are direct outgrowths of his concern with Miltonic or Drydenesque diction and of his own imaginative insight into the relation between word and idea, the result is a poetic achievement very near perfection, ^{as} witness :

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung,
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay,
And Freedom shall a while repair
To dwell a weeping hermit there.⁸³

Or,

And hamlets brown, and dim-discover'd spires;
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
The dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.⁸⁴

- In so far as the characteristics of Collins' technique as a whole are concerned, much could be said. First, there is a marked tendency towards stanzaic regularity. The best odes in the book are written in stanzas of four or six lines. The Pindaric poems, similar in this respect to "Lycidas," tend to conclude with passages in even meter. Thus "The Passions" closes with a section in iambic tetrameter, and the Epodes in "To Liberty" are in the same measure. The "Ode on the Poetical Character" deviates only occasionally from regularity. Comparing Collins with Dryden, one sees clearly that the poetic practice of fifty years had led gradually and naturally from irregularity at any price to irregularity as counterpoint.
- Second, Collins seldom appears to have any clear impression of his poems as wholes. Each does, to be sure, have a theme, but this is developed by arranging comment on it in stanzaic

⁸³ From "Ode, Written in the Beginning of the Year 1746" No epithet can be spared from this, though epithets are plentiful. Some critics—e.g., O. Elton—appear to feel that this lyric is not properly an ode. Why not? It is an almost perfect example of the heroic ode, Du Bos style. Horace has two-stanza odes, and see Milton's "At a Solemn Musick."

⁸⁴ From "Ode to Evening" Compare Warton's "Ode to Taste."

parallels.³⁵ The "Ode to Liberty" might almost be three separate poems; and even the "Ode to Evening" could stop at the end of stanza five. Third, the element of parallelism within the stanzas often suggests that the unifying force is not any kind of logic but rather only a zest for expression. An impressive example is the opening stanza of "The Manners," which is, of course, not Collins at his best:

Farewell, for clearer ken design'd,
The dim-discover'd tracts of mind,
Truths which, from action's paths retired,
My silent search in vain required!
No more my sail that deep explores;
No more I search those magic shores,
What regions part the world of soul,
Or whence thy streams, Opinion, roll:
If e'er I round such fairy field,
Some power impart the spear and shield,
At which the wizard Passions fly,
By which the giant Follies die!

Associating Collins' dictional and metaphorical bent with his attitude towards prosody, we shall find that in his verse there had somehow ripened the germ of change that would lay low the pride of the century in its well-ordered Parnassian groves, wherein even the asymmetrical had been logically designed, although Collins was not the cause but only the principal manifestation of those secret forces of innovation. Some description of those forces has already been attempted; and the little that can be added here will not bring one much nearer a solution of the mystery of their origin. Again it was a definition of the reason—which had satisfied relatively few and had been not so much as known to a great many men—that was

³⁵ Unfortunately there is no good study of parallelism in English verse. Collins' use of it is, like Dryden's, often intricate but sometimes purely rhetorical. Thus the triple invocation of the opening strophe of the "Ode to Mercy" lacks any subtlety of arrangement, the poet relying on diction to adorn his meager scaffolding. Few of the better English poets display so rudimentary a sense of architectonic form.

under attack.³⁶ "Reason" gave way to "Romanticism"—true enough, but in so far as the victorious hosts were new at all, they were a heterogeneous lot assembled under the banner of what one can only vaguely term "imagination." A great deal of the strength of the impact doubtless resulted from a new way of looking at nature, both as a guide to living and as a norm of art. Yet who shall tell wherein the novelty lay? Able critics, Elizabeth Manwaring³⁷ and Myra Reynolds³⁸ among them, have for example studied the rise of a new nature feeling in English poetry and art during the eighteenth century. A great deal of work remains to be done, however, before we shall be able to discourse with any certainty upon the character of the change and its causes. All that can legitimately be said is that the dominant mood of aesthetic perception slowly became what one may tentatively call picturesque naturalism. Very much written from Horace to Shakespeare about holding the mirror up to nature still remained valid, but the nature reflected in the mirror was somehow different.³⁹ It was still in part rococo, or even baroque, as the treatment of "gothic" or of landscape in almost as early romantic painting will show quite clearly. The greatest European artist of the first half of the century was Friedrich Schinkel, and all one can decently surmise concerning Schinkel was that somehow

³⁶ This definition was of course Cartesian, in one way or another. The scholar's difficulty in attempting to state it clearly or to trace the outlines of the process by which it was set aside grows out of the fact that the eighteenth was a century of "private judgment" which created Pope, Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke, but it also created Bishop Butler and William Law, who in turn ushered in the Oxford Movement and the retreat from "private judgment." It is a brave historian who under such circumstances will come up with a map of the ideological landscape.

³⁷ *Italian Landscape in Eighteenth Century England*, by Elizabeth Wheeler Manwaring (New York, 1925).

³⁸ *The Treatment of Nature in English Poetry between Pope and Wordsworth*, by Myra Reynolds (Chicago, 1896). See also *Some Religious Elements in English Literature*, by Rose Macaulay (New York, 1931).

³⁹ See "The Return to Nature in English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century," by C. C. Moore, in *Studies in Philology* (University of North Carolina Philological Club, Chapel Hill, 1917), XIV, 243-91.

he was "Romantic" in part because, but not merely only because, there was a Gothic inlay in what he fashioned out of rococo and neoclassical wood.⁴⁰

In so far as Collins is concerned, it must suffice to point out that his practice had its critical complement. The Augustan Parnassians had gone deeply in debt to the bastard literary Cartesianism of Boileau, for whom syllables were all countable on fingers and poetic effect the inevitable reward of mixing the right ingredients properly. Against this system a later generation of French critics revolted. Charles Batteux⁴¹ proposed "imitation of nature" as the common goal of the arts, meaning at least in part that there was a strange element of *évolution créatrice*⁴² in nature, to which no system of aesthetic mechanics could quite find the clue. And the Abbé Du Bos, whose *Critical Reflections on Poetry, Painting and Music* appeared in an English translation by Thomas Nugent in 1748,⁴³ was startled by his discovery of the fact that good poetry conveyed a meaning over and above the meaning of the words it employed. The proper business of poetry was, therefore, not to instruct but to "warm the soul" and rouse up laudable "passions," such as love of country. It could only be successfully undertaken by those who had the "divine fire" by which images are evoked from chaos. The imagistic impulse thus became, for Du Bos, the fundamental poetic impulse.⁴⁴

Naturally the Abbé was not precisely a lone voice crying in the wilderness.⁴⁵ But it will help to explain Collins if one notes that the resemblance between him and Du Bos is, though

⁴⁰ Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781-1841).

⁴¹ *Les Beaux Arts réduits à un même principe*, by Charles Batteux (Paris, 1747), especially Part III, Chapter III. For comment on Batteux, see *Le Prérromantisme français*, by A. Monglond (Grenoble, 1930), I, 36, and, more fully, *Charles Batteux: Sein Leben und sein Lehrgebäude*, by E. von Danckelmann.

⁴² The phrase is, of course, not Batteux' but Bergson's.

⁴³ See particularly I, 40, 235, 239. The original French edition appeared in 1719.

⁴⁴ See the summary in *Le Prérromantisme français*, I, especially pp. 36-41.

⁴⁵ See the summary (in Elton, *A Survey of English Literature*, pp. 120-22), of *Elements of Criticism*, by Henry Home, Lord Kames (1762).

probably coincidental, none the less striking. Collins is almost obsessed by the idea of the "divine fire";⁴⁶ and his poetry is electrified solely by image making. The "Ode on the Poetical Character" is in particular a programmatic statement which the Abbé might have signed with satisfaction. Compared with Roscommon's *Essay* of half a century previous, Collins' poem clearly reveals both the new conception of the ideal poet-genius and the new pictorial sense. "Truth" is dear to both writers; but Collins puts "ecstatic Wonder" even before Truth. And yet, one may add, this recognition of "Wonder" is not with Collins a stirring out of slumber of the ontological sense—of intuition of the naked glory of the fact that things can be—but rather only an act of groping towards the visionary Neo-Platonism which Wordsworth would for a time entertain, and which Collins thought Milton had entertained.⁴⁷ It is easier, and perhaps wiser, to compare Roscommon's word painting with Collins'. The Earl is still wholly baroque:

Have you been led through the Cumean cave,
And heard th' impatient maid divinely rave?
I hear her now; I see her rolling eyes
And, panting, "Lo! the god, the god," she cries;
With words not hers, and more than human sound,
She makes th'obedient ghosts peep trembling through the ground.

And this is what Collins sees:

High on some cliff, to heaven up-piled,
Of rude access, of prospect wild,
Where, tangled round the jealous steep,
Strange shades o'erbrow the valleys deep,
And holy Genii guard the rock,
Its glooms embrown, its springs unlock,

⁴⁶ See, for example, the characterization of Shakespeare in the final stanza of the "Ode to Fear"

⁴⁷ Note in this poem the lines,

I view that oak, the fancied glades among,
By which as Milton lay, his evening ear,
From many a cloud that dropp'd ethereal dew,
Nigh spher'd in heaven, its native strains could hear.

While on its rich ambitious head,
An Eden, like his own, lies spread.

The "Genii" are still there, but the rest would surely have been to Caspar David Friedrich's liking.

Much that has just been said calls to mind older conceptions of Pindar. We may, however, interpose some remarks upon the regular odes of Collins' contemporaries. The younger Wartons display all of his symptoms but do not come down with his splendid disease. In the odes of Joseph,⁴⁸ stanzas of four, six, nine, and more lines (symbols of a return to the poetic models of the seventeenth century) are studded with epithets. Probably the best poem in the lot is the "Ode to Solitude," but its properties and diction are so artificial that the love of nature displayed is no full compensation for the all-too-much of the art.⁴⁹ Yet this Warton can upon occasion be relatively simple, as in this brief and almost musical "Ode to Music".

Queen of every moving measure,
Sweetest source of purest pleasure,
Music, why thy powers employ
Only for the sons of joy?

Only for the smiling guests
At natal or at nuptial feasts?
Rather thy lenient numbers pour
On those whom secret griefs devour.

Bid be still the throbbing hearts
Of those whom death, or absence, parts,
And, with some softly whisper'd air,
Smooth the brow of dumb despair.

Prosodically that is still in the best Augustan tradition. In so far as it strikes a new note, either emotionally or in the choice

⁴⁸ Chalmers, Vol. XVIII.

⁴⁹ The Gothic note is struck.

While through the melancholy room
A dim lamp casts an awful gloom.

of epithet, it suffices to show how good Collins (with whom Warton had once intended to collaborate) really was. Warton can be exasperating, as in such lines as these :

The drooping daisies bathe in dulcet dews

The pregnant glebe now bursts with foodful grain

Or village mastiff's wakeful howl.⁵⁰

Even so the travail out of which something new would eventually be born was in progress here, under the aegis of Milton, whom the poet lauded.

Thomas Warton was a learned man; and his verse,⁵¹ even the "Panegyric on Oxford Ale," always conveys a faint aroma of midnight oil. For inspiration he went beyond Milton and Spenser, beloved though they were, to Gothic gloom. Perhaps for this reason even his odes in quatrain forms have something wild and disheveled about them; and for others he used irregular stanzas which—as in "The Grave of King Arthur"—may suggest the ballad. Every ode is interesting for some reason. "The Hamlet" is probably the first English lyric in which boys "rob the raven's ancient nest." All the machinery of romance—castles, ruins, shepherds and sheep, cloisters, minstrels—is crowded into "Written at Vale-Royal Abbey." And the quite irregular "First of April" is a wholly satisfying nature poem and, in addition, one of the earliest lyrics in which the bean, that sturdy symbol of romantic naturalism, is celebrated:

Scant along the ridgy land

The beans their new-born ranks expand.

But this most scholarly of the Wartons was, in so far as the ode is concerned, a revolutionary personage. He spurned the

⁵⁰ These lines are from the following lyrics, in the order given "Ode to Evening"; "Ode to a Lady on the Spring", and "Ode to Solitude."

⁵¹ Chalmers, Vol XVIII

bonds of Renaissance form. In his work the wayward voices of nature and fancy were summoning verse beyond the pale of culture so neatly staked out by Horace; and it needed only one further excursion to render possible, for Wordsworth and Keats, obloquy of what imaginative life inside that pale had meant. To be sure, Warton was still translating Horace in Milton's rhymeless stanza.⁵² But telltale obsolete phrases such as, "Waves his imbowering head" were there to make the Parnassians sense the presence of a rebel.⁵³ All things considered, however, such a poet must not be taken too seriously. He marks a minor date in the history of the ode. ✓

Two kindred spirits may be associated with the Warton school. William Shenstone's work complements, in time and other respects, the writings of the elder Warton; and it may be added that he whiled away many a studious hour in Pembroke College. His work⁵⁴ includes some of the best among earlier odes addressed to abstract qualities, notably one which directs a heartfelt apostrophe to health. The "Ode to Indolence" reflects the contemporary vogue for the "rural mossy bed" and "circling wood." Yet the far better "Ode Written 1739," with a neat iambic tetrameter stanza rhyming *aabccb*, is written round a well-worn pastoral love theme.⁵⁵

Mark Akenside, who had set himself the task of writing

⁵² "From Horace, Book III, Ode XIII"

⁵³ That Warton did not merely copy the pastoral tradition will be rather obvious if one compares his nature odes with contemporary poems in that tradition, say George Lord Lyttelton's "Ode in Imitation of Pastor Fido" (Chalmers, XIV, 177). A stanza reads

Though linnets sing, though flowers adorn the green,
Though on their wings soft Zephyrs fragrance bear
Harsh is the music, joyless is the scene,
The colour faint for Delia is not there

See also *Georgic Tradition in English Poetry*, by Dwight L. Durling (New York, 1936), p. 136. On Johnson's critical attitude towards all manifestations of Wartonian antiquarianism, see *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century*, by Henry A. Beers (New York, 1898), p. 207.

⁵⁴ Chalmers, Vol. XIII

⁵⁵ In both odes the continuous recourse to tedious exclamation is one reason for the failure of the verse.

twice twenty odes,⁵⁶ is not infrequently looked upon as a kind of crochety and effusive ancestor to Wordsworth. But he is well worth reading, though his properties (half pastoral and half studious) and his sluggish rhythms are more than mildly irritating. Akenside is interesting chiefly for his stanza forms. Like all other poets of the era who went back to Spenser and Milton, he turned from the Roman quatrain to the lengthier English cadences. Yet when he is very good, as in "To the Evening Star," he retains the firmness of contour, the concluding half-epigrammatical, sententious line, which had been his century's most commendable achievements. In short, he displays many of the good effects of commerce with Milton and few of the grosser vices.⁵⁷ Perhaps the second stanza of the poem named will illustrate:

O Hesper! while the starry throng
 With awe thy path surrounds,
 Oh! listen to my suppliant song,
 If haply now the vocal sphere
 Can suffer thy delighted ear
 To stoop to mortal sounds.

That has no exotic dictional magic, but it has form and a very considerable beauty. "To the Cuckoo," with a seven-line stanza which drags a little, is already somewhat trite; and though "To Sir Francis Drake" is not without a claim to being a worthy patriotic ode, it lacks all the ancient fire of Drayton. Some of Akenside's odes are prosodic experiments which did not come off (for example, he introduces two closing Alexandrines into a poem of two ten-line stanzas), and which Johnson properly disparaged. Still "On the Winter Solstice" is a fairly effective summary of the pleasures to which the elements can drive man;

⁵⁶ Chalmers, Vol. XIV. He wrote a very good ten-line stanza—"To the Honourable Charles Townshend"—and varied the six-line stanza agreeably, as in "To the Evening Star"

⁵⁷ See, in the ode "On Lyric Poetry," Akenside's tribute to Pindar, beginning, Majestic, in the frown of years,
 Behold, the man of Thebes appears

and "On Lyric Poetry" comments with some (not much) individuality on the Greek lyric poets.

Therewith we return once more to the legacy of Cowley. Most of the poets named wrote Pindarick, or what they assumed to be Pindaric, verse. The great version of Pindar by West⁵⁸ would doubtless have sufficed to revive interest in the poet, had a stimulant been necessary; and there were at least two other reasons why the form regained a measure of popularity—the improved scholarship of the average literary man, and the waning of French influence.⁵⁹ Older forms returned to favor, and the Miltonic chorus in particular expanded by leaps and bounds. Collins, the Wartons, Shenstone, and Aken-side all courted the Pindaric muse, but only the first succeeded memorably. Of course one should not wish to miss altogether the "dappled mead" of Shenstone's "Rural Elegance,"⁶⁰ or the flowers and nymphs of his "Ode after Sickness";⁶¹ for, if one can accept the procession of trite adjectives with a smile, both of these lyrics will prove lasting sources of moderate delight.

But Collins towers above the others, though he may not differ radically with them on the subject of poetic theory. "The Passions" is close to Dryden, being lighter and swifter than its author's other Pindaricks.⁶² But the posthumously published

⁵⁸ West's Preface (Chalmers, XIII, 141-44) is the ablest critique to have appeared in English at that date. He is judicious, makes no immoderate claims for his poet, and dispels effectively (though to be sure in vain) the "wildness" myth. Of some interest is the introductory ode by Joseph Warton, who once more denounces the "enervate bards" who write love verse, and praises Pindar, Homer, Euripides, and Sophocles.

⁵⁹ *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, by Robert W. Babcock (Chapel Hill, 1931), especially pp. 90-110 and 199-208.

⁶⁰ This ode enshrines poor Shenstone's delight in landscape. Some stanzas, notably the seventh, have a pleasant Spenserian undertone.

⁶¹ Despite its machinery, this poem has a vitality and a prosodic charm that come from the skillful use of tetrameter lines linked together by adroitly handled rhymes.

⁶² This ode was written in imitation of Dryden, and was set to music by Dr. William Hayes, Oxford professor of music, according to a letter dated Nov. 8, 1650 (*Poetical Works*, p. xv). So far as I have been able to ascertain, the music is not extant. Collins was himself a musician and his views are expressed in

"Ode on the Superstitions of the Highlands" is a landmark in the history of the form.⁶³ Here the epithets converge under the spell of strange, rich music to form a prelude to Keats and all modern verse. If it were just a little more mature, a little less "poetic," this would (one thinks) be among the half-dozen greatest odes in the language. At any rate, coming as it did not only after the age of Pope but also after the debacle of the eighteenth century "enthusiasts,"⁶⁴ the poem is so sudden and surprising an utterance of genius that it almost seems comparable to one of the "leaps" that occur in the process of natural evolution. Compare Shenstone's adjectives with epithets like these:

There, each trim lass, that skims the milky store,
To the swart tribes their creamy bowl allots.
By night they sip it round the cottage door,
While airy minstrels warble jocund notes.

This ode style is notable, for three reasons in particular. First, the naturalism characteristic of the visual impressions of the period is tempered with classicism, somewhat in the manner (though not with the regal success) of Goethe, so that the poem is in this respect anticipatory of Keats. Reading the lines,

Old Runic bards shall seem to rise around,
With uncouth lyres, in many-colour'd vest,
Their matted hair with boughs fantastic crowned,

one sees rather clearly that romanticist material has been clad in Grecian drapery. Indeed, the neo-Hellenism of the period had an effect of some importance on the ode. Collins' English

"On Our Late Taste in Music" The critique of Italian music there offered may be compared with Goldsmith's strictures in *The Citizen of the World and the Bee*, pp 420-21 Ainsworth (*Poor Collins*, p. 85) thinks, however, that Collins would have shared the views on poetry expounded by J. Warton in the *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*

⁶³ This ode was not printed until more than two decades after Collins' death.

⁶⁴ See *Enthusiasm in English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century*, by Sister M. Kevin Whelan, S S J (Washington, D C, 1935).

contemporaries are like him in conceiving of Greek form as something soft, melodious, and well bred.⁶⁵ In this they resembled writers in other lands, as anyone will note who compares the style of Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* with that of his *Iphigene*. It is a quite different impression than that reflected by Milton in the *Samson Agonistes* choruses, or by Landor in the *Pericles and Aspasia* odes.⁶⁶ Very probably this mid-century neo-Hellenism is one reason why the trend towards regular verse patterns was so marked. Second, there is a tendency not merely to stress the colorful, pictorial epithet, but also to make the verb serve a kindred use, as in the line,

To that sad spot where hums the sedgy weed.

Third, the elements of older music and rhetoric having to a large extent been eliminated, the ode came to rely primarily upon the element of address for affinity with the Pindaric tradition.⁶⁷ That element would come in time to seem the sole important characteristic of the ode to not a few writers and critics.

One appreciates the originality of Collins' achievement the more if one bears in mind the fact that the "Superstitions" ode is, despite its Spenserian contours, almost a sonnet sequencé. Stanzas one and two might well end, for example, with the fourteenth line.⁶⁸ I do not know how to account for this effect, although (as recent students have observed) one of the notable consequences of the Miltonic revival was a lively interest

⁶⁵ For example, Akenside (especially his "Hymn to the Naiads"), Mason, Gray, and Glover

⁶⁶ *Vide infra*, p. 286

⁶⁷ The poem is addressed to Home, but likewise invokes the "homely swains" and the "scenes that o'er my soul prevail." On Collins and the Scottish Highlands, see "Interest in the Scottish Highlands in Eighteenth-Century English Literature," by Marjorie Anderson (unpublished dissertation, University of Chicago, 1926), p. 16

⁶⁸ The stanza, ending with an Alexandrine, falls one line short of being two Spenserian stanzas. Collins' last nine lines rhyme *ababedddd*, whereas Spenser's scheme is, of course, *ababbcbcc*, which may or may not help to explain slowness of movement. Nearly all of Collins' stanzas could be recast into sonnets. Note also that Spenser's sonnet scheme is not very different

in the sonnet.⁶⁹ Moreover, if one takes Collins' eleventh stanza as an example, it will be seen that the pattern divides naturally into halves, quite as a sonnet does. Perhaps as a result, there is virtually none of the pictorial stagnation of the *Faerie Queene* rhythm. The poem is a concatenation of moods engendered by scenes and legends, lacking in clear drift and momentum but nevertheless moving forward as a whole. A good deal of the language echoes the literature of Collins' own time: there are lines that suggest Gray's *Elegy*, and lines that mirror the high regard in which the primitive was then held; there is an emotion of affection for persons, as well as of fondness for places.

Collins' position in the history of the Pindarick ode can be determined the more readily if one notes the verdict of his own age. Johnson's⁷⁰ strictures are well known: "His lines are commonly of slow motion, clogged and impeded with clusters of consonants." Gray's equally famous comment⁷¹ was that Collins had a "bad ear." And Sir Egerton Brydges⁷² wrote of the "Superstitions" ode: "There are in it occasional traces of Collins' genius and several good lines—but none grand—none of that felicitous flow and inspired vigour which mark the Ode to the Passions and other of his lyrics—none of that happy personification of abstract conceptions which is the characteristic of his genius." It is interesting to compare Brydges' opinion with Scott's verdict on Dyer's "Grongar Hill."⁷³

The antithesis to Collins was of course Dr. Johnson, who clung firmly to "reason" in poetry and frowned upon anything that resembled Neo-Platonic or kindred heresies. The great man himself was addicted to quatrains celebrating love under

⁶⁹ See *John Keats and the Sonnet Tradition*, by Lawrence John Zillman (Los Angeles, 1939)

⁷⁰ *Lives of the Poets*, VI, 67.

⁷¹ See *A History of English Criticism*, by George Saintsbury (New York, n. d.), p. 251.

⁷² *Poetical Works*, pp. liv-lv

⁷³ *Vide supra*, p. 169.

the aegis of the four seasons, and brought each of his efforts to a granitelike, sententious finale. "Winter" ⁷⁴ is almost a Christian moralist's excursion into the realm of Catullus, and the last four lines of what started out to be an amorous ditty are a sermon. Boswell has recorded ⁷⁵ how the Doctor, "being fatigued with his journey, retired early to his chamber," where he wrote an excellent Latin ode to Mrs. Thrale. Pindarick could not beguile so Roman a person, for all its associations with the religious spirit. But Pindar himself he knew and used at least once as a breakfast companion.⁷⁶ Perhaps—for he had a shy fondness for melody—he may have heard rippling about the Greek some echo of music.

If the entourage of the Doctor did nothing else, it amused itself at the expense of each member's contributions to the store of odes. Garrick's "Ode upon Dedicating and Erecting a Statue to Shakespeare" was viciously trounced by Warburton.⁷⁷ Yet the actor himself made merry at the expense of Richard Cumberland, who evidently looked upon the form as synonymous with irregularity. At any rate Foote ⁷⁸ quotes a "bagatelle" by Dr. Barnard, bishop of Limerick, recording Garrick's practice of reading Cumberland's odes backward. They appear to have made as much sense when consumed in that fashion. Cumberland's method was simple and exacted no burdensome toil of the bard: "Whilst we passed a few days at Reswick, I hastily composed an irregular ode, which was literally struck out on the spot, and is addressed to the sun; for as the season was advancing towards winter, we had fre-

⁷⁴ For Johnson's poems, see Chalmers, Vol XVI

⁷⁵ See *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*, by James Boswell (London, 1925), p 122 Dr McPherson's Latin ode is cited on p 219, Boswell praising it warmly Johnson also commended the Latin ode written by J Philips as a token of gratitude towards St John (*Lives of the Poets*, II, 101)

⁷⁶ "Anecdotes by the Rev Dr. Thomas Campbell" in *Johnsonian Miscellanies*, edited by George Birkbeck Hill (Oxford, 1897), II, 101

⁷⁷ *Warburton and the Warburtonians* by A W Evans (London, 1932), p 265 Warburton is quoted as saying "Cibber's nonsense was something like sense, but this man's sense, whenever he deviates into it, is much more like nonsense"

⁷⁸ Foote, *Memoirs*, p. 93.

quent occasion to invoke that luminary." ⁷⁹ "Bozzy" himself was the author of an *Ode to Tragedy*.⁸⁰ And Sheridan, who indited a monody to the memory of Garrick,⁸¹ was inspired by Handel's setting of "L'Allegro" to write *An Ode to Scandal* ⁸² in something akin to the same form.

But the Johnsonians were destined to lose the battle. The victorious forces of the imagination were plainly unmasked not only in Collins but also in the *Odes by Mr. Gray* which Johnson severely drubbed, not always unreasonably. From the problem of Collins to the problem of Gray is only a step, but both are problems in their own right. There are notable similarities: university background; an unusually wide familiarity with the classical poets; and a deep interest in the older English writers.⁸³ Mathias contends that Gray "never sate down to compose any poetry without previously, and for a considerable time, reading the verses of Spenser." ⁸⁴ This statement may be an illustration of the hyperbole, but it is nevertheless obvious that Collins and Gray alike were deeply indebted to the *Faerie Queene*. Finally there is the matter of visual perception of nature or of landscape. Collins' pictures are brighter, more sensitively drawn and "Romantic" in mood; Gray's reflect much more clearly the mingling of classicism and landscape which Poussin and Lorrain had taught a whole generation to accept as the proper aesthetic frame for its own impressions.⁸⁵

Nevertheless the differences between the two poets are equally impressive. What lends such a poem as the "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College" ⁸⁶ its marked individuality

⁷⁹ *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1806), pp. 158-59

⁸⁰ *An Ode to Tragedy, by a Gentleman of Scotland, James Boswell, Esq.* (Edinburgh, 1761)

⁸¹ *The Lounger's Common-Place Book* (London, 1796), II, 105.

⁸² Edited by R. Crompton Rhodes (Stratford-on-Avon, 1927) This ode appears to have been written about 1772

⁸³ See *Thomas Gray*, by R. W. Ketton-Cremer (London, 1935), *passim*

⁸⁴ *Observations on the Writings and on the Character of Mr. Gray*, by Thomas J. Mathias (London, 1815), p. 41

⁸⁵ See E. W. Manwaring, *op. cit.*

⁸⁶ *The Poems of Gray and Collins*

is a quality not found in Collins. If one takes almost any passage separately, it will read pretty much like a thousand other eighteenth-century passages :

Alas, regardless of their doom,
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond today.

It may be objected that the antique note of classical necessity is sounded more strongly here than elsewhere. Perhaps—but there is always Swift. And though the sententious reflection may be a little more melancholy than usual, it is not essentially different from the normal meditations of the century, as witness Pope's *Essay on Man*. The answer to the query doubtless lies in the consummate regularity of this ode. The meandering Pindarick has been forced into the confines of a monostrophic stanza, and a very good one of ten lines; and these ten make up a unit each part of which is nicely adjusted to the whole. What is true of the stanza is likewise true of the entire poem. Gray's success is due to the fact that he has discovered the value of subordinate clauses in prosodical structure, sentence building, and thought. Reading any Collins ode, one is constantly distracted from the poem as a whole by the colorfulness of an epithet, the pertinence of an image, the melody of a word. But in the "Eton Ode" there is not one such break.

This recipe Gray always followed, and it helps to explain why he could be so awe-inspiring in his own time and so little read (except, of course, for the *Elegy*) in our own day. Often he uses epithets in a manner reminiscent of the Warton school—i.e., they weight down each line in turn; but if one removes the epithets, the poem completely disappears, which is never the case with Wartonian verse. Thus one could write ·

'Twas on a vase's side,
Where China's art had dy'd
The flowers that blow,⁸⁷

⁸⁷ From "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat," which is a mock epic in a few lines. The flawless structure of this ode has been profusely admired.

but there would remain nothing but bad prose. That is great art, which Gray practiced also in his endeavors to restore the true Pindaric form. "The Progress of Poesy" ⁸⁸ is certainly a beautiful poem, despite the fact that it blends Petrarchan obscurity with belated rococo. Mathias ⁸⁹ assumed that the "peculiar formation" of Gray's Pindaric stanzas "could only have been planned and perfected by a master genius"; and the critic will concur that while the defections from regularity are comparatively slight, they are managed with consummate skill. The two strophes close with sonorous Alexandrines (vehicles for the eloquence which always beguiled this poet), but are in the main skillfully interwoven four- and five-stress lines. For the epodes, Gray devised a stanza of seventeenth-century Pindarick lineage but new in the use it made of contrasted iambic and trochaic rhythms. It is unquestionably one of the noble English ode stanzas, though the architectonic beauty is veiled by diction which many find exasperatingly artificial. Gray's language at its best has a faint Miltonic ring, as in the line,

With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

But one cannot well imagine the author of the Nativity Ode writing,

Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears,

which is almost a sampling of the eighteenth century at its worst.

"The Bard" is akin in subject and spirit to Collins' "Highland Superstitions" poem. It would be difficult to say which is the greater achievement, but there can be little doubt that

⁸⁸ *Odes by Mr Gray* contained "The Progress of Poetry" and "The Bard." Gray had chosen a motto from Pindar—"Vocal to the Intelligent Alone"—and he later asserted that the words were more applicable than he had realized. Johnson's grim verdict was: "Some hardy champions undertook to rescue them from neglect, and in a short time many were content to be shown beauties which they could not see." *Lives of the Poets*, VI, 182.

⁸⁹ *Op cit*, p 71. He praises Gray's "transfusion into his own mind, of the lyrical compositions of ancient Greece, and of the higher *cannoni* of the Tuscan poets."

the second is destined to remain far more popular in the best sense. Gray's poem looks backward—is almost a final flowering of the humanistic muse. Collins, however, is a tragic figure in whom the transition is incarnate. Though Gray's narrative speeds on magisterially, though he marshals for the reader the spectacles of legend and of nature, he suggests very little to the senses. His draperies are always of brocade, but they are nowhere so stiff and gilt as in "The Bard."⁹⁰ The poem was formidable enough to be famous, but it inspired no younger poet of talent.

Similarly it would be hard to find a libretto more remote from the normal composer's demands than the "Ode for Music,"⁹¹ which must have puzzled the Duke of Grafton no end as he listened to it on the day of his installation as Chancellor of Cambridge. One hopes he pondered carefully the appended explanatory notes. The poem is a concession to formal irregularity, insisted upon by the tradition governing odes written for music. Gray's most original odes are undoubtedly (and paradoxically) those he translated from the Norse and the Welsh. It is true enough that such poems come by the name of ode most dishonorably, but in the case of "The Fatal Sisters," at least, the poet suited the material to the form.⁹² Here are vigorous alliterative quatrains, which he apparently translated from a Latin version of the Icelandic originals. The subject matter comported well with much that Thomas Warton and others had written or were writing in a "gloomy" vein. There is likewise much of interest in "The Triumphs of

⁹⁰ The use of the Alexandrines in this poem is particularly effective. Gray employs them to close each stanza. Most care is again lavished on the epodes.

⁹¹ The music was composed by Dr. Randall, the date was July 1, 1769. It is said that the singers were "well-versed in Judas-Maccabaeus." See Ketton-Cremer, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-8.

⁹² The dictional blemishes have often been noted. Nevertheless, a note of memorable originality is struck in the second stanza:

Glitt'ring lances are the loom
Where the dusky warp we strain,
Weaving many a soldier's doom,
Orkney's woe, and Randver's bane

Owen," translated, no doubt indirectly, from the Welsh. It is unfortunately a fragment, yet even so it has a numerous and distinguished progeny.⁹³ The other lyrics in this group—notably the highly colored "Descent of Odin"—are odes only on the basis of their "wildness"; but they did help to create a vogue to which not a little modern English literature owes its inception. Even today more than one critic would subscribe to the verdict that Gray's odes from the Norse have seldom been equaled since by anyone handling similar material, in any medium. They crowd much austere romance into a few lines.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that Gray's success assured the longevity of the ode written in stanzas of more than six lines, whether monostrophic or Pindaric. It is doubtful whether Collins alone could have saved the second variety (in its Pindarick form as well), for his reputation was slight and that of Gray tremendous. Gray's was all the more impressive an art in his own time for being methodical. The objectives he set for himself are in a measure revealed by his correspondence, as frank and interesting on this topic as on many others. Thus he writes to Mason: "Why you make no more of writing an Ode, and throwing it into the fire, than of buckling and unbuckling your shoe. . . . Extreme conciseness of expression, yet pure, perspicacious and musical, is one of the great beauties of lyric poetry; this I have always aimed at, and could never attain; the necessity of rhyming is one obstacle to it: another and perhaps a stronger is that way you have chosen of casting down your first ideas carelessly and at large, and then clipping them here and there, and forming them at leisure, this method, after all possible pains, will leave behind it in some places a laxity, a diffuseness."⁹⁴ In short, though

⁹³ See *Specimens of the Antient Welsh Bards*, translated by Evan Evans (London, 1764). Many other poets have provided versions of odes by Welsh and Norse poets. Yet only one—James Clarence Mangan—appears to have been notably successful.

⁹⁴ *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, edited by Paget Toynbee and Leonard Whibley (Oxford, 1935), I, 307. Gray's letters are rich in information about the eighteenth-century ode. Thus he refers (*ibid.*, I, 27) to Musgrave Heighington,

Gray was in agreement with his century in thinking of poetry as an exercise in specific forms, he possessed what it no longer had—the humanist's feeling that his monument could be more enduring than bronze only if he regarded language as a material as firm and trying as bronze. His brethren, he must sometimes have felt, were ignorant of the impassable gulf that sunders poetry from doggerel. That he burned with a hard, gemlike flame is doubtless his most signal distinction in the history of the English ode.⁹⁵

who in 1745 published settings of his own composition for *Six Select Odes of Anacreon in Greek and Six of Horace in Latin*. These were dedicated to Robert Walpole. One was sung in public by Heighington's wife, Lydia. Gray wrote Latin odes (p. 158) and Latin paraphrases of Horace (p. 85). He discusses the odes of Collins and J. Warton (p. 261). He writes Warton in March, 1747, that he is "now in Pindar" (p. 277). He comments on odes by Voltaire and Lyttelton (p. 281).

⁹⁵ Johnson said (*Lives of the Poets*, VI, 193) "His art and his struggle are too visible, and there is too little appearance of ease and nature." Only the "Elegy," he felt, did not suggest this criticism. The point is of interest because the "Elegy" does really foreshadow Romantic attitudes toward poetic form, while Gray's other poems (except the translations) do not.

CHAPTER EIGHT: *Lesser Ode Writers and the Romantic Trend*

WE SHALL NOW turn to that rather dense array of less important figures in ode history who laid to rest what remained of neoclassicism, and welcomed the coming of Romanticism. It is with deep regret that one presents them as illustrations of a "trend" rather than for their own sakes, since many of them are genuinely beguiling as poets and human beings. There are great names among them, for instance Burns, but the glory that surrounds their memory was not earned by illustrious ode writing. Others are pedestrian and learned, or witty and worldly wise.

There is, to begin with, Gray's friend, William Mason—a careful scholar and a man of some ambition who was unfortunately also a Canon of York Cathedral and given to notions which, unless they bear on poetic standards, are likely to bore modern readers to distraction. Mason's odes, whether Pindaric or irregular, are rhetorical and diffuse, yet some of them contain passages deserving of more praise than they have generally received. Thus "To Memory" has a fine laud of Milton, and the final stanzas of the "Secular Ode" are sincere and relatively eloquent.¹ Mason is more interesting, however,

¹ For Mason's poems, see Chalmers, Vol. XVIII. These are the opening lines of the final stanza of the "Secular Ode"

Rise, hallow'd Milton! rise, and say,
How, at thy gloomy close of day,
How, when "deprest by age, beset by wrongs;"
When "fall'n on evil days and evil tongues,"
When darkness, brooding on thy sight,
Exil'd the sov'reign lamp of light,
Say, what could then one cheering hope diffuse?
What friends were thine, save Mem'ry and the Muse?

as the author of dramas studded with choral odes in the ancient Greek manner. Some of these, when sundered from the texts in which they appear, are readable and eloquent lyrics. The best are in *Caractacus*, and occasionally breathe genuinely poetic sighs.² It is of course true that neither Mason's skill nor the poetic ability of many who have since followed his example demonstrates that the Greek play and its choral interludes can be domesticated in English.³

As a letter writer Mason⁴ can be counted on for a good deal of information concerning the ode as his time conceived of it. He lets one see how painstakingly, studiously, he set to work; how he was haunted by the idea that music and the dance might be restored to use as accompaniments of verse; and how resolute he was in exploring what he believed were the as yet unvisited domains of English ode prosody. One passage—almost a confession of failure, this—points out the conclusions at which the writer of verse to be set to music must inevitably arrive: "This art [modern music] is now carried to such a pitch of perfection or if you will of corruption, as makes it utterly incapable of being an adjunct to poetry. . . . Our different cadences, our divisions, variations, repetitions, without which modern music cannot subsist, are entirely

² *The Works of William Mason* (London, 1811) See, for example, these lines from the first "Chorus"

Lift your boughs of vervain blue,
Dipt in cold September dew,
And dash the moisture, chaste and clear,
O'er the ground and through the air

³ It should be added that Mason's *Musaeus a Monody to the Memory of Mr. Pope* (London, 1747, text in Chalmers, XVIII, 323) is probably the principal result of the vogue of "Lycidas" during this period. Other examples of the "Monody" are George Lord Lyttelton's "To the Memory of Miss Lucy Fortescue. A Monody" (Chalmers, XIV, 180), Thomas Blacklock's "Philanthes a Monody" (Chalmers, XVIII, p. 200), and William Lisle Bowles' "Monody on the Death of Dr. Warton" (*Poetical Works of William Lisle Bowles*, edited by George Gilfillan, New York, 1854, II, xiii). There are others.

⁴ *Works*, I, 85. Note the letter concerning his paraphrase of Job "My sole aim was to show, that, whether it was rendered in the Horatian or Pindaric manner, the lyrical beauties of the sacred original would appear equally manifest."

improper for the expression of poetry, and were scarce known to the ancients." ⁵ That was the plain truth of the matter, which only fanatical devotees to a more or less fashionable tradition could refuse to recognize.

On others besides Mason the influence of Gray was for a time impressive, as a mound of minor Pindaric verse indicates. Yet this verse proves little except that the study of Greek was assiduously cultivated. James Beattie's efforts, for example, are highly rhetorical exercises on the "passions," in strophes, antistrophes, and epodes.⁶ Nor did the mongrel forms of Pindarick verse, suggesting either Cowley or Milton, have any notable practitioners after Gray, though several endeavored to profit by Gray's example. The odes of William Mickle ⁷—"Vicissitude" is probably his best—are oratorical in a vapid way; and the serious verse of Francis Fawkes ⁸ and Robert Lloyd ⁹ is doubtless worse than Mickle's. It is curious that so good a classical scholar as Fawkes ¹⁰ should have reflected so little of the classical spirit. The most interesting Pindarick of the late decades of the century is James Grainger's

⁵ *Ibid*, II, 192.

⁶ Chalmers, Vol XVIII Beattie's poems are, however, interesting for non-poetical reasons (as so many Pindarics of the period are) Witness the influence of the "Noble Savage" in the following excerpt from his "Ode to Peace"

On Cuba's utmost steep
Far leaning o'er the deep
The goddess's pensive form was seen,
Her robe of Nature's varied green
Wav'd on the gale; grief dim'd her radiant eyes,
Her swelling bosom heav'd with boding sighs,
She eyed the main, where, gaining on the view,
Emerging from th' ethereal blue,
Midst the dread pomp of war
Gleamed th' Iberian streamer from afar.

⁷ *Ibid*, Vol XVII Mickle is a good instance of the poet who favored stanzas of six and eight lines.

⁸ *Ibid*, Vol XVI Note the "Vernal Ode," which is written in eight-line stanzas.

⁹ *Ibid*, Vol XV. Note the "Ode to Genius"

¹⁰ Fawkes was famed in his own day as the translator of Theocritus, his edition being liberally subscribed to. In addition he supplied versions of other Greek authors, including Apollonius Rhodius.

"Ode to Solitude,"¹¹ which not only summarizes the spirit of early Romanticism but proves how much better the minor poets of the era became when they hit upon trochaic rhythms. Perhaps (it is doubtful) trochaic stanzas are easier to write. Much of Johnson's antipathy to blank verse is to be accounted for by the fact that neither he nor any other poet of the time, with the possible exception of Smart, could handle the measure. That nearly every one of the group is potentially or actually charming in the trochaic mode is rather surprising and not too easy to explain.

Little that is novel or interesting can be gleaned from the official Pindarick poets of the era. William Whitehead¹² was a man of sense, and his remarks on the art of writing verse¹³ are not unworthy of being rescued from oblivion. But his ode composition was functional, being a series of effusions in honor of royal anniversaries. It is hardly strange that in all the reams of verse which the Hanoverian sovereigns extracted from their laureates, or would-be laureates, there is not a stanza worth reading; for the reason cannot conceive that it could have been otherwise under these dull and commonplace monarchs. Yet Whitehead did make the stuff sound relatively rational, by taking the accent from the dowdy family and placing it on Albion, which he praised with a ferocious and belligerent patriotism that may in part have inspired Johnson's immortal epigram. He tried a number of stanzas, but his best is one that varies three- and four-foot lines.¹⁴

¹¹ Chalmers, XIV, 475 It is interesting to observe that Grainger, after passages needing only a little added fire to make one think of Marvell, sinks back contentedly into the heroic couplet mold

¹² *Ibid*, Vol XVII Whitehead, who succeeded Cibber as Poet Laureate, also wrote a smooth but innocuous Pindarick, "The Ode to the Tiber"

¹³ *Ibid* His views are summarized in "A Charge to the Poets," which advocates an almost Sainte-Beuvean breadth of view.

¹⁴ Mention must be made here of Sir William Jones, a man of learning and considerable ability, who wrote translations of classical and Renaissance odes and, above all, adaptations of poems in a variety of Oriental languages His fame reposes chiefly on the hymns in which he enshrined Indian lore, and on

Quite generally the trend was towards Miltonic or Jonsonian odes in regular cadences. The six-line stanza was doubtless the favorite one. It was used, for example, by Samuel Boyse,¹⁵ Charlotte Smith,¹⁶ John Logan,¹⁷ Thomas Chatterton¹⁸ and Thomas Blacklock.¹⁹ The jewel among their lyrics is probably Charlotte Smith's "A Descriptive Ode, Supposed to Have Been Written under the Ruins of Rufus Castle, among the Remains of the Ancient Church on the Isle of Portland." Rarely has bleak, Gothic, romantic sentiment been so firmly wedded to grim fatalism in an ode. Logan has much of the quality of Charles Cotton of yore, but his six-line stanzas are not to be compared with his quatrains. Blacklock, too, is prevailingly regular. There is some mildly effective argument in his "Ode on the Refinements in Metaphysical Phi-

the *Moallakat*, which he translated from the Arabic. For a reprint of all of this, see Chalmers, Vol. XVIII *The Modllakdt, or Seven Arabian Poems*, by Sir William Jones, appeared in London in 1782. It was probably the first attempt in English to cultivate the primitive or exotic ode with learned thoroughness, and it gave to the concept of the ode as a "frenzied poem" a new substance. A more modern and impressive version of these lyrics, which Jones labeled "poems," is *The Seven Golden Odes of Pagan Arabia, Known Also as the Mollakat*, translated by Lady Anne Blunt and done into English verse by Wilfred Scawen Blunt (London, 1903).

¹⁵ As in "Ode to Mr William Cuming on His Going to France" (Chalmers, XIV, 542). It does not argue well for Boyse's insight into stanzaic values that he uses five-foot lines rhyming coupletwise. The poem is an amusing attack on Frenchified Englishmen.

¹⁶ *Elegiac Sonnets, and Other Poems* (London, 1800). This is the ninth edition of a work of interest to the student of the Miltonic influence, and the ode in question was published during the late '80s. A stanza may be cited to illustrate

Northward the Demon's eyes are cast
O'er yonder bare and sterile waste,
Where, born to hew and heave the block,
Man, lost in ignorance and toil
Becomes associate to the soil
And his heart hardens like the native rock.

¹⁷ Chalmers, Vol. XVIII

¹⁸ The "Ode to Miss Hoyland" is typical of Chatterton's pre-antiquarian work (Chalmers, XV, 461). The stanzas rhyme *aabccb*, the meter is iambic pentameter.

¹⁹ Chalmers, Vol. XVIII Blacklock, a Scottish divine afflicted with blindness, clung to the ancient custom of musicianship. He was a performer on several instruments, and "generally carried in his pocket a small flageolet, on which he played his favorite tunes."

losophy,"²⁰ which is again in stanzas of six lines. Little more need be said here concerning the odes of these poets and their fellows. The quality of their work seems to deteriorate as the number of lines increases. The reader ascends and descends alike in going from the eight-line patterns of Robert Dodsley²¹ to the enormous expanse of William Thompson's²² "Hymn to May," which repeats the Fletcher variation of the *Faerie Queene* stanza seventy-seven times. But though the ten-line sequences of John Langhorne's "Ode to the River Eden"²³ are not so banal as rumor would have it, and though the twelve-line stanzas of Walter Harte²⁴ drip with execrable cant, the task of searching through them all is rewarded only by the certainty that further evidence of advance toward regularity will be forthcoming. It is doubtful whether

²⁰ The prevailing dissatisfaction with metaphysical speculation (see Goethe) is reflected in these stanzas:

Led by her hand a length of time,
Thro' sense and nonsense, prose and rhyme,
I beat my painful way,
Long, long, revolv'd the mystic page
Of many a Dutch and German sage,
And hop'd at last for day

But, as the mole, hid under ground,
Still works more dark as more profound,
So all my toils were vain,
For truth and sense indignant fly,
As far as ocean from the sky,
From all the formal train

It may be that Blacklock's verse, sponsored by Joseph Spence, then Oxford Professor of Poetry, helped to make the six-line stanza popular

²¹ Chalmers, Vol. XV "Melpomene, or the Regions of Terror and Pity" has a 55553356 stanza, rhyming *ababccdd* in accordance with obviously Spenserian origins

²² Chalmers, Vol. XV Thompson's work included a fairly good version of Anacreon's "Cupid in Love" This and other Anacreontics were popular throughout the period The fad was often ridiculed, e.g., by John Scott

²³ One stanza begins

O goddess of the crystal bow,
That dwell'st the golden meads among,
Whose streams still fair in memory flow,
Whose murmurs melodise my song

²⁴ See Chalmers, XVI, 368, "Contentment, Industry and Acquiescence under the Divine Will: an Ode"

more than a very few poets of the time even so much as read Cowley.

The Horatian quatrain was in great favor, but need not be discussed at length here. John Cunningham,²⁵ whose best work was done in Anacreontic forms, composed an elegiac "Ode on the Death of His Late Majesty," which is as close as the period came to Prior and Marvell, though it suggests Gray's *Elegy* in the first instance. Then there was John Scott, the Quaker poet, who wrote some rather effective lyrics in a pacifist strain, one of which—the ode beginning "I hate that drum's discordant sound"²⁶—is not unworthy of a modest place beside Collins' "1746 Ode," which it somewhat resembles in form. Many of Scott's poems were written in longer stanzas, but the finest (a very good ode, indeed) is "The Evening Walk," the quatrains of which will remind a reader interested in such comparisons of Lenau.²⁷ It makes admirable use of perspective, and is wholly free of that lamentable diffuseness which was the proper vice of the age. Yet Scott's are no longer Roman quatrains. Romanticism has softened the contours and the philosophy.

Scott held that "The Horatian, or lesser ode, is characterized principally by ease and correctness."²⁸ This maxim was based on a diligent reading of the classics, but the poet and his fellows went for their materials to exotic themes or to observation of nature. As a consequence much of what earlier times had meant by "song" rather than "ode" returned to favor; and it is difficult to determine precisely what either term now implied. Thus John Logan's "Ode to a Fountain"

²⁵ *Ibid*, Vol. XIV.

²⁶ For Scott's poems, see *ibid*, Vol. XVII. It is curious that Scott insists upon dragging out the last line of each stanza in this ode.

²⁷ A stanza will illustrate:

Young Theron down the valley strayed,
At evening's silent hour,
When bright the setting sunbeams played
On Hertford's distant tower

²⁸ *Critical Essays*, p. 110

is in the Pyrrha stanza, and is as remarkable for compression, vitality, and melodiousness as it is for its suggestion of the Psalms rather than of the classics.²⁰ There is an echo of Smart in this stanza :

All things decay; the forest like the leaf;
Great kingdoms fall, the peopled globe,
Planet-struck shall pass away;
Heavens with their hosts expire.

Even more song-like is the "Ode to the Cuckoo,"³⁰ so notable as a prelude to the great Romantic bird-song odes of the next century. In such work as Logan's, older English poetic traditions were blending with new tides of lyric feeling. Accordingly the whole array of humanistic forms—the origins and special histories of which had been pretty much lost to sight—was about to merge for a time in a piebald unity to which no other name than "lyric"³¹ could be given. The ballad, the song in its Elizabethan forms, the epigram in a dozen senses, the Jonsonian and the Miltonic ode—all these were bound to seem undistinguishable from one another and to serve alike as vehicles for the expression of "romantic" emotion.³²

²⁰ There is a great deal both of the Psalms and of the classics in the work of Samuel Boyse, whose Spenserian and other longish stanzas now meet with the approval of some critics. I cannot share this enthusiasm.

³⁰ Not a little controversy has raged over this poem *The Life and Complete Works of Michael Bruce*, by James Mackenzie (Edinburgh, 1914), marshaled evidence to show that Bruce was the real author, and it is attributed to him in *The Edinburgh Book of Scottish Verse* and in *The Cambridge Book of Lesser Poets*, edited by J. C. Squire (Cambridge, 1927). Other students continue, however, to accept Logan as the author.

³¹ In older usage, the word "lyric" had been the generic term, under which the various melic species could be grouped. With the nineteenth century, however, the specific terms commenced to fade out. See *The Lyric*, by John Drinkwater (London, 1929).

³² Mention may be made here of a few additional authors and titles. Volumes having a bearing under the subject include *Epistles, Odes, &c., Written on Several Subjects* (London, 1724), *Poems on Various Subjects*, by Lemuel Abbot (London, 1765), and *The Literary Museum, or Ancient and Modern Repository*, edited by Francis G. Waldron (London, 1792). A few additional odes may be named. Tobias Smollett's "Ode to Independence" employs the tripartite Pindaric designations but is nevertheless irregular. It is accompanied (Chalmers, XV, 587-90) by "Observations on Dr. Smollett's Ode to Independence" *Poems on*

If one may at this point interpose a glance backward, what best characterizes the lyric utterance of the English eighteenth century is its failure to reconcile conflicting objectives. The dominant concern was submission of a poetic impulse grown riotous to classical, even neoclassical, discipline. But there were many who, though they venerated the authors of antiquity, looked askance at a prosodic legalism which they believed was stifling the "enthusiastic feelings" they identified with the creative impulse. The issue, stated in terms of ode history, was between Pindar and Horace. Neither side won a victory. When the century was half over, poets were far from Cowley and Marvell alike. Gray stood about where Milton had taken his stand, though Gray's was a far less impressive genius; and round about him were many who wrote in the shadow of the Renaissance, echoing the diction of the *Faerie Queene*, of Shakespeare and of Milton. Ode forms were, it is true, affected by the astringent treatment the Age of Pope had applied to seventeenth-century stanzas. Notions of "transport" and *beau d'ordre* had likewise played a part. Yet as the century closed the patterns were, as has been said, in the main akin to those of Jonson and Milton. Even the seeming revival of the true Pindaric did not alter the trend to regularity and controlled style.³³

These remarks may need a word of explanation. It is very generally assumed that Romanticism meant a throwing off of the bonds of French and neoclassical restraint, and that the mood of picturesque naturalism which characterized the general aesthetic outlook of the late eighteenth century implied a freer treatment of art media. This assumption is in large

Various Subjects, by the Rev Samuel Bishop (London, 1796), includes an ode, "The Man of Taste," which is Pindarick though modeled on Milton's "Il Penseroso," which was viewed (together with its companion piece) as an ode at that time.

³³ The stanzas tended to become more regular, and to close with a final Alexandrine. See, as a late example of the period, the "Ode on the Vindication of Liberty," in *The Poetical Works of Charles, Earl of Crawford and Lindsay* (London, 1814), p. 146.

measure correct, but at least in so far as the ode is concerned, it must not be taken to imply a greater irregularity of verse patterns. That is first of all not in keeping with the facts, as Collins and his successors clearly indicate. Keats is as Romantic a poet as ever lived, but his odes tended to and finally did achieve absolute regularity. The explanation is that the baroque and neoclassical odes had made two kinds of irregularity canonical, basing one on Pindar's example and the other upon a mistaken concept of the primitive. Both were artificial creations of the reflective and image-making intellect. As soon as naturalism gained the upper hand, it abolished them and returned either to the older models of English poetry or to the genuine primitive (which, of course, did not suggest poetry at all, but the rhythmical prose of Ossian or, later on, the strophic demiverse of Walt Whitman). Indeed, one must add somewhat paradoxically that even the conventions of the older poets, Milton and Jonson, were too unconventional, or unnatural, for the younger generation of naturalists. No other group of writers in English literature has written so much lyric verse in iambic pentameter and tetrameter lines.

Retrospectively considered, the unceasing experimentation with music as the medium through which lyric feeling could be most satisfactorily expressed was another event of great importance in eighteenth-century ode history. The ancient spontaneity of Elizabethan song belonged to a dead past; and poets as well as composers had to reckon with subtler and more artificial styles which seemed to subordinate language to the role of libretto. It is significant that when Blake revived the idea of actually singing his poems he wrote the music himself. Nevertheless, the century strove manfully to cope with the problem of right relationship between the poet and the composer; and from Dryden to Gray odes in constant succession were written to accompany formal music. Special patterns were invented; the cantata blossomed into

the oratorio. Yet on the whole these experiments did not succeed, and some of them were, as we have seen and shall see, even laughed down. Instinctively the poet and the theorist³⁴ arrived at the conclusion that language must attempt to absorb some of the functions of music; and one thinks that this conclusion can be found at least dimly adumbrated in such critical treatises as Joshua Steele's *Prosodia Rationalis*³⁵ and William Mitford's *Enquiry into the Principles of Harmony in Language*.³⁶

Now we have arrived at the turn of the century, and may reiterate once again the familiar truism that no sharp line of demarcation sunders one literary epoch from another. The lesser ode writers manifest the dominant Romantic characteristics, or cling to neoclassical precepts, or do both. Robert Burns illustrates exceptionally well what has just been said. That he stood completely outside the academic tradition is one thing; that he paid reverent homage to that tradition is another. For information concerning the art of verse, he went from *A Select Collection of English Songs* to the works of Shenstone and Thomson, and thence to the critics and prosodists. It may even be—as Cunningham³⁷ and many others have thought—that this self-education aided his genius very little.³⁸ Yet what else was Burns to do? He had caught the knack of writing a tune for a ditty very aptly, indeed; but there was no instinct which could guide him aright in the selection of forms not themselves suggested by the melody.³⁹

³⁴ Attention should doubtless be called again to *A Critical Dissertation on the Character and Writings of Pindar and Horace, in a Letter to the Right Honourable The Earl of B——*, Schomberg (London, 1749)

³⁵ *Prosodia Rationalis* . . . or, an Essay towards Establishing the Melody and Measure of Speech (2d edition, London, 1779)

³⁶ This was the title of the second edition of 1804. The first edition was published anonymously and was entitled *An Essay upon the Harmony of Language*.

³⁷ *The Complete Works of Robert Burns with a New Life of the Poet*, edited by Alan Cunningham (London, n. d.), pp. 264–68. Here is quoted the letter addressed to Dr. Moore on August 2, 1897

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. xxxv. Cunningham is here comparing the songs written for *Johnson's Museum* with those written for George Thomson's collection. The second, he opines, "are less happy in their humour and less simple in their pathos"

³⁹ *The Life of Robert Burns*, by Franklin Bliss Snyder (New York, 1932), p. 90.

Even that instinct would have been helped by an ear relatively well trained by reading other poets. Thus Burns refused to accept Louis Gordon's demand for an extra syllable in each fourth line of "Bruce to His Men at Bannockburn."⁴⁰ The poem was conceived of as an ode, and for it Burns chose the ancient Sapphic stanza, though the constant inversion of the first foot and the rhyme-scheme give that stanza an air of primitiveness. His other overt imitations of the ode form are well-known—the "Ode Sacred to the Memory of Mrs. Oswald,"⁴¹ a mock-Pindaric savoring of a reckless bitterness that explains in part Burns's reiterated praise of Peter Pindar;⁴² the straight Pindarick of "Despondency";⁴³ the Horatian quatrains of "Delia. An Ode," which is assumed to have been modeled on Pope;⁴⁴ and the extraordinary brilliance (though not the impeccable good taste) of "The Jolly Beggars. A Cantata."⁴⁵

A period like ours no longer responds warmly to the peculiarities of the Scottish dialect. But in any language the "Bruce to His Men" ode would remain a very fine patriotic poem, distinguished alike for verve and fine art. It remains to add that such universally accepted masterpieces as "To Mary in Heaven"⁴⁶ are stock-in-trade odes of their century; and that for the beautiful and characteristic "To a Mouse"

⁴⁰ For the texts of Burns's poems, see *Complete Works*

⁴¹ With this poem there may be associated the regrettable "Monody, on a Lady Famed for Her Caprice"

⁴² *Complete Works*, p. 353 In a letter to Thomson, Burns wrote "The very name of Peter Pindar is an acquisition to your work His 'Gregory' is beautiful"

⁴³ It is interesting to note that the poet cannot keep the jingle out of his verse, as witness

While praising, and raising
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
A wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky

⁴⁴ *Complete Works*, p. 86, "It is said that one day a friend addressed to him some verses from the *Star*, composed in the pattern of Pope's Song, by a Person of Quality 'These lines are beyond you,' he added . . . Burns mused a moment and then recited 'Delia An Ode' "

⁴⁵ See Snyder, *op cit*, p. 163

⁴⁶ Note the element of address This beautiful lyric was written to the tune of "Death of Captain Cook"

and "To a Mountain Daisy" Burns employed a variation of the Horatian quatrain ⁴⁷ which, like the six-line hymn stanza, recurs constantly in modern verse based on simpler melodies. Thus, for example, the stanza of Newman's "Lead, Kindly Light" ⁴⁸ is that of "To a Mountain Daisy," though to be sure the dimeter lines are placed differently. No doubt one is shown here an interesting manifestation of the effect of song upon verse forms. That in Burns's case the tunes were simple and even a little uncouth was an advantage; for it had been clearly demonstrated that the art of writing verse to fit the more highly artistic forms was, practically speaking, doomed to failure.⁴⁹

The mark of education was left by indirection upon all the "singers of the people" who followed in the wake of Burns, as well as upon the literary gentry who had docilely gone to school. Robert Tannahill is a good example of the first; John Clare is another and a better one. Together with Robert Smith, his faithful composer companion, Tannahill wrote songs after the fashion of his beloved Burns, whose memory he celebrated in odes rendered on birthdays before the Paisley Burns Club.⁵⁰ He, too, is a poet who turned to eighteenth-century verse forms when he sought to rise above the level of aimless song writing. Clare is the greatest, if the most unstable, of the English peasant poets; and he presents quite

⁴⁷ Burns also studied the quatrain carefully, as witness the technique of "Hark! the Mavis" The effect of the song is obtained from the "Carmen Seculare" stanza by stressing the first syllable of nearly every line and by the adroitly handled rhyme scheme

⁴⁸ Text in *The Catholic Anthology*, edited by Thomas Walsh (New York, 1932), p. 250

⁴⁹ Burns wrote many lyrics in the traditional manner, of course, to accompany ballad tunes For an early criticism, see *The Complete Marjorie Fleming*, transcribed and edited by Frank Sidgwick (New York, 1935), p. 7. "A Mr. Burn writs a beautifull song on a Mr. Cunhaming whose wife desarr'd him truly it is a most beautiful one."

⁵⁰ *The Works of Robert Tannahill with a Life of the Author, and a Memoir of Robert A. Smith, the Musical Composer*, by Philip A. Ramsay (London, 1851), p. 153. This is a Pindarick and was read, not sung Tannahill also praised Peter Pindar in an irregular ode, and wrote a curious four-stanza "Ode to Jealousy" (p. 147).

incidentally many a nice question to the student of poetic form.

Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery (1820) leaves one convinced that Burns must have been a pattern and an inspiration. But we have the poet's word that at the time the only Scottish bard he knew was Ramsay;⁵¹ and it has since become apparent that his real models were Bloomfield, Goldsmith, and John Cunningham.⁵² Though Clare was an adroit fiddler and had a varied repertory of tunes,⁵³ there is little to indicate that he based his rhythms on such tunes. What concerned him most was diction—a language was needed which, founded on accurate observation of nature, would rid verse of the clichés which pastoral writing of the previous century had accepted as indispensable beauties.⁵⁴ As a consequence, the virtues of such poems as Clare wrote in the ode forms⁵⁵ must not be sought in stanzaic or melodic arrangement. The earlier examples are written in variants of familiar models, some of them (for example, "To the Rural Muse,"⁵⁶ and "To an Infant Daughter"⁵⁷) being rather intricate. In later poems there is often a curious approximation to Keatsian stanzas and diction, as witness "The Last of Autumn."⁵⁸ It remains true, however, that Clare's lyric pieces are generally written in quatrain forms.⁵⁹

Tom Moore was quite literate; and I think (with Saintsbury)⁶⁰ that ultrafamiliarity with the *Irish Melodies* has

⁵¹ See *John Clare*, by J. W. and Anne Tibble (New York, 1932), p. 121

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 121-22

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 111

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

⁵⁵ For Clare's odes, see *The Poems of John Clare*, edited by J. W. Tibble (London, 1929)

⁵⁶ Written in ten-line stanzas, the measure being iambic pentameter

⁵⁷ Written in the six-line hymn stanza

⁵⁸ *The Poems of John Clare*, I, 352 Another example is "Autumn" (*ibid.*, II, 3), a stanza of which reads

Siren of sullen moods and fading hues,
Yet haply not incapable of joy,
Sweet Autumn! I thee hail
With welcome all unfeigned

⁵⁹ For example, "The Skylark Leaving Her Nest," *ibid.*, II, 293.

⁶⁰ *English Prosody*, III, 83-87.

blinded us all a little to his worth as a poet. He might almost be described as a case of Burns *à rebours*, having made his debut in 1800 as a translator of Anacreon.⁶¹ Then, after fighting a duel with Jeffrey over *Odes and Epistles* (1806), he awoke to fame as the furbisher of Ireland's harp. Judged by any standards save those of musical prudishness, "'Tis the Last Rose of Summer" is an excellent, though sentimental song; and "The Light of Other Days" is good, with or without music. But these things were fashioned after conventional English models, and Moore was a good enough student of those models—even before he took up the Irish harp—to make his prosodical achievement deserving of more attention than it has received. The "Odes to Nea,"⁶² written according to Horatian patterns, are so good that they would establish the fame of almost any eighteenth-century poet after Gray, and it is possible that if Goldsmith had written them they would figure in a good many anthologies. The moral to be derived from all this is that Moore's excellence lies in the fact that he forced his exotic material—whether Celtic, American, or Oriental in origin—into firmly welded and conventional molds.⁶³

The standard poetic practice of the early decades of the century was still classical to an extent seldom realized. One may be quite sure there was more "Gothic gloom" and picturesque decay in the verse of the last thirty years of the eighteenth century than there was in that of the first twenty of the nineteenth. There was also, if one excepts Coleridge, more prosodical experimentation. The standards adopted by the periodicals were prim and rigid; the dominant rhetoricians,

⁶¹ For these translations, see *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*, I, 51-152. They were followed by a book of satirical poems, *Anacreon in Dublin*, by an anonymous writer who attacked Moore and the Roman Catholic party in Ireland (Dublin, 1814).

⁶² *Poetical Works*, Vol I *Memoirs, Journals and Correspondence of Thomas Moore* (Boston, 1853) contains many allusions to ode writing thus (Vol IV, p. 38) a reference to "Mrs Piozzi's 'Ode to Posterity'."

⁶³ For Moore's satirical and humorous odes, see *Poetical Works*, Vol II

led by Blair,⁶⁴ were formalists of the most insistent kind. Hazlitt says that when he was young he was unable to tell whether Collins' "Ode to Evening" or Mrs. Anna Laetitia Barbauld's "Ode to Spring" was the better poem; and he continued to feel that the second was a "very pretty" thing.⁶⁵ The magazines blossomed out regularly in Horatian paraphrases and irregular odes; and books containing similar floral displays appeared without intermission.⁶⁶ Gradually, however, echoes of the great rebels—Keats in particular—could be overheard.⁶⁷

Perhaps the only real competition the classical tradition met in these circles came from the German influence which, though it profoundly affected English literature, only very slightly tinged the ode. There is a bit of Klopstock in Campbell,⁶⁸ and a little of Buerger (possibly) in Coleridge.⁶⁹ The two lived side by side amicably enough, however, in the higher and lower periodicals. Doubtless the two foremost "magazine poets" were Southey and Hood. The Southey thus honored was, of course, a poet who had fought down the pantisocratic demon in his breast and made the necessary internal adjustments for reception of the laureateship. Here, however, he can interest us only as a writer of stately official odes, which he rigged out in full Pindarick dress. Doubtless the best of them is the "Ode on the Battle of Algiers,"⁷⁰

⁶⁴ *Lectures on Rhetoric*, by Hugh Blair (Edinburgh, 1783). This remained a standard treatise for generations, and was still used in American schools as recently as twenty years ago.

⁶⁵ In the essay "On the Living Poets," in *Lectures on the English Poets* (London, 1818) The "Ode to Spring" is to be found in *The Works of Anna Laetitia Barbauld* (London, 1825), p. 102. Another ode, "To Remorse," is in a five-foot iambic stanza rhyming aabbccdd

⁶⁶ Thus the *London Magazine* noticed during 1821 *Odes and Other Poems*, by Henry Nule (p. 110), *Poems*, by Thomas Gent (p. 427), and *Sketches of Scenery, Foreign and Domestic, Odes, and Other Poems*, by David Carey (p. 458).

⁶⁷ For example, "Ode, Autumn," by T. H. (Thomas Hood), *London Magazine*, February, 1823.

⁶⁸ *The Poetical Works of Thomas Campbell*, edited by W. E. Aytoun (New York, n d.), p. 30.

⁶⁹ *German Influence in the English Romantic Period*, by F. W. Stokoe (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 101-4.

⁷⁰ *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey* (Boston, 1879), Vol. II

which breaks with his rule and keeps to a rhymeless five-line stanza the pattern of which is 53543. The "Ode Written after the King's Visit to Scotland" ⁷¹ can also be read for the sake of its literary comment. The others are valuable only as readings of the barometer of English jingo sentiment. In addition Southey's *Commonplace Book* has numerous observations on the history and practice of the ode which the historian will cherish. ⁷²

Thomas Hood is doubtless (though some may insist on George Darley) the most amiable minor poet of the period. The Keatsian odes ⁷³ are interesting, not merely as early tributes to a greater genius but likewise for their own sakes. Celebrating the Moon, Autumn, and Melancholy with feeling and liquid syllables, they leave one regretting that they are mere derivative verse. It is as a writer of humorous odes that Hood triumphed. There are no more rollicking rhymes anywhere than those in the "Ode to Rae Wilson, Esquire," ⁷⁴ in which "Trollopes" and "collopes," "wafers" and "chafers" commingle harmoniously. And if there is a more gratifying humorous lyric in the language than the "Ode to H. Bodkin" ⁷⁵ most readers have missed it. Yet these poems are all in the strict eighteenth-century tradition, though the humor and the diction do belong to a new age. ⁷⁶

⁷¹ First published in *The Bijou* (London, 1828), p. 81. This same volume contains a characteristic Anacreontic of the period, by T. K. Hervey.

⁷² Thus in the *Commonplace Book, Fourth Series* (London, 1851), p. 572: "It is a received maxim with all composers of music, that nothing is so melodious as nonsense. . . . Manly sense is too harsh and stubborn to go through the numberless divisions and subdivisions of modern music, and to be trilled forth in crotchets and demiquavers. For this reason thought is so cautiously sprinkled over a modern song, which it is the business of the singer to warble into sentiment." See also, in the same Series, a critique of Mason's odes (p. 295), and a quotation from Beattie lauding "Alexander's Feast."

⁷³ *Poems*, by Thomas Hood (Boston, 1854), Vol. II.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. I.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. IV. See also "Ode to Mr. Malthus," Vol. III.

⁷⁶ See, in *The Life and Letters of George Darley*, by Claude Coleer Abbott (Oxford, 1928), p. 80, this "Ode to a Certain Librarian," addressed to H. F. Carey from the British Museum during 1830.

Reverendissimo Translator of the Inferno

A story or two below these there dwelt George Dyer, Lamb's impecunious friend, "with a head uniformly wrong, and a heart uniformly right," ⁷⁷ whose *Poems* ⁷⁸ ripple along rapidly in the backwash of Gray and Mason, but whose "Prefatory Essay on Lyric Poetry" is an admirable example of what the average *litterateur*, with no originality and little kinship with good taste, thought about the lyric art. Dyer lauds Pindar, says of Horace that "if a few of his compositions have no great poetic character, yet the generality of them are elegant, several beautiful, and a few sublime," terms "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" odes and praises them warmly, dubs Ronsard (whose name was not infrequently mentioned in this age) "pedantic and meretricious," is severe with Cowley and Dryden, waxes ecstatic on the subject of Gray, and opines of music that "in England it is the practice to enliven the worst versification with the best music." He draws up an elaborate set of classifications for the ode, in none of which anybody has discerned the slightest value. There are Romantic notes in Dyer's criticism—for example, one possible allusion to Novalis ⁷⁹—but on the whole he is

From this poetical epistle you may possibly, by some means or other,
hook or crook, contrive to learn-O

That I (Deep Dweller of the Musean Purgatorio)

Am in the second story-O.

There is little else in Darley's verse of concern here

⁷⁷ *Literary Sketches and Letters. Being the Final Memorials of Charles Lamb*, by Thomas Noon Talfourd (New York, 1848), p. 148. The letter to Coleridge concerning Dyer reads in part as follows: "The second volume is all criticism, wherein he demonstrates to the entire satisfaction of the literary world, in a way that must silence all reply forever, that the Pastoral was introduced by Theocritus and polished by Virgil and Pope—that Gray and Mason (who always hunt in couples in George's brain) have a good deal of poetical fire and true lyric genius—that Cowley was ruined by excess of wit (a warning to all moderns)—that Charles Lloyd, Charles Lamb, and William Wordsworth, in later days, have struck the true chords of poetry."

⁷⁸ *Poems*, by George Dyer (2 vols., London, 1802), for the statements which follow, see Vol. I, pp. viii-lxix. There is also an "Essay on Representative Poetry," Vol. II, pp. 1-18.

⁷⁹ Dyer writes (*ibid.*, I, lxi) "some of the sublimest compositions of ancient and modern poetry are but paintings of what is called common life." Novalis's famed maxim is "Die beste Poesie liegt uns ganz nahe."

as soundly Augustan as if such a book as *Lyrical Ballads* had never been written.

Stately verse, in the manner of the great days of yore, likewise had many protagonists.⁸⁰ Thus there was the Reverend H. H. Milman, whose rhetoric aroused the Romantic ire, but whom many revered. His "Judicium Regale"⁸¹ is what in the days of Parnell would have been considered good run-of-the-mill Pindarick. The subject is Napoleon, and there are some impressive lines of the rhetorical variety. Samuel Rogers, once a very famous man whose books were published in formats that still delight the bibliophile, even essayed the Pindaric.⁸² Into a comparable mood fell the great Sir Walter himself, celebrating "The Field of Waterloo"⁸³ in an extensive Pindarick poem. There are reams of this sort of thing well down to near the middle of the century. In very many instances, however, the designation "ode" has been dropped.

Two isolated patriotic odes rise far above the level of all this work, recalling Drayton and Marvell. The Reverend Charles Wolfe⁸⁴ was a learned and devoted man; and it is good that so much virtue should be recalled by one poem, "The Burial of Sir John Moore," the spirited anapests of which—probably derived in part from Campbell's "Hohenlinden"—bring the ode momentarily into contact with the Romantic ballad. Thomas Campbell's own "Ye Mariners of

⁸⁰ *Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson*, edited by Thomas Sadler (London, 1869), III, 150 "Landor maintained that 'Milnes is the greatest poet in England'" Richard Monckton Milnes, author of *Poems of Many Years* (London, 1838), is now virtually forgotten save for his achievement in editing Keats

⁸¹ *The Belvedere Apollo*, by H. H. Milman (London, 1821), p. 137

⁸² *Poems*, by Samuel Rogers (London, 1816), p. 88 Rogers terms none of his shorter lyrics, including the perennially quoted "Wish," an ode

⁸³ *The Poetical Works of Sir Walter Scott* (New York, 1838), Vol. IV The verse is quite distressingly rhetorical The "Caledonia" song in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* should probably be designated a short Pindarick

⁸⁴ *Remains of the Late Rev Charles Wolfe, A B*, edited by J. A. Russell (London, 1836) The editor says (p. 26) concerning "Hohenlinden": "This powerfully descriptive and sublime ode was a favorite with our author" The resemblance indicated is in the rhythm

and: A Naval Ode" ⁸⁵ has an interesting ten-line stanza a refrain. It is unquestionably a fine poem, though the influence is so pronounced that (like Drayton's "Agincourt") it would not be termed an ode unless the author's name were there to be respected. Campbell also has a good ode to the Memory of Burns," in five-line stanzas rhyming *bc*. ⁸⁶

Though has now been said to indicate that there was no break, in the early years of the nineteenth century, with classical humanistic tradition. The critics went along saying pretty much the same things their predecessors had said; ⁸⁷ the vast majority of poets continued to do pretty much the same things ⁸⁸ their ancestors had done. Nevertheless the old caste system had already broken down. Exceptions being made to every rule; the couplet was no longer like a stolid standing, firm and trim, in a long file of his equals; the ancient English aversion to being corseted and clippant manifesting itself in no end of ways, the most important of which was the growing hostility to poetic diction even among those who strongly disagreed with the Wordsworthian program. In addition there was so much political and military

in his *Poetical Works*. The poem enjoyed immense popularity and was read countless times.

It may be added concerning the Reverend John Leyden, whose *Poetical Works* was edited by James Morton and published in London in 1819, because "Ode on an Indian Gold Coin" is included in Gosse's *English Odes*. The eight-trimeter stanza has some charm, the poem being written to describe scenery and evoke the mood of travel. Leyden, who translated extensively from Arabic, Hebrew, and other tongues, clung to regular stanzas in his odes, two of which—"Ode, Addressed to Mr Geo. Dyer on Scottish Hospitality and Manners" and "Scottish Music An Ode"—have some literary and local interest.

In prosody a great advance was registered, of course, by the publication of Win Guest's *History of English Rhythms* (London, 1838). Unfortunately it does not discuss the ode.

A representative minor poet of the time was Henry Kirke White, and his term "ode" may be viewed as fairly typical. See *The Life and Works of Henry Kirke White* (London, 1826). The Preface declares (p. 13) that the Odes, that "To an Early Primrose" was written at thirteen" but the poem itself (p. 41), in the quatrain stanza, is not called an ode.

strife in the world—not to mention economic distress—that the poets were naturally carried away by their feelings and led to emphasize the “messages” they felt compelled to proclaim. Normally these were not worth a great deal more than the opinions of other tolerably well-informed and intelligent citizens, but they had the effect of pushing purely formalistic considerations into the background, or of endowing the poet’s artistic decisions with a measure of civic significance. Thus Wordsworth’s insistence upon the “speech of the common man”⁸⁹ sounded democratic, while his later blank verse acquired a reputation for being stuffy and conservative.

This change in the basic conventions of poetic workmanship was accompanied by a trend towards a new definition of the ode which was based to a very considerable extent upon eighteenth-century prosodic experience. Originally the form had been born of contact with classical or humanistic models. These last had been diverse, quite necessarily so, since poets understood the same processes and objectives very differently. To Jonson, Pindar was not in any essential way what Pindar was to Cowley. Ronsard introduced the ode to England, but by the middle of the seventeenth century Ronsard had been virtually forgotten. And though poetry was intimately related to music in Milton’s mind, he had in all probability never conceived of the ode written to accompany music that became Dryden’s principal title to fame as a lyric poet. Then the eighteenth century selected from the treasures of the past what it wanted, and made light of the rest. Its odes were, indeed, often based on more accurate scholarship than had generally prevailed in earlier times. But it was not given to studious imitation of the models, striving rather to effect a synthesis of the suggestions placed at its disposal by the English and the classical traditions. The shorter ode quite

⁸⁹ One notable effect was to limit temporarily the poetic vocabulary. “Wordsworth would not stand very high in a list of authors ranked according to the importance of their vocabularies”,—“Wordsworth and Kipling,” in *The Collected Essays, Papers, etc., of Robert Bridges* (London, 1933), No. XIII, p. 28

lost its individuality; and though there clung to the longer ode some shreds of irregularity, it clearly tended to become regular and to rely upon certain accidental characteristics for its identity. Among these there was, for example, the element of address. The form tended, moreover, to throw off the associations with "inspiration" and religion which had so long qualified it, and to become a meditative or philosophic poem.⁹⁰

Finally one must add that the definition of "wit" had been altered, and that the ode bore witness to the change. Many turned to it during the late eighteenth century as a medium for the expression of satirical or humorous fancy. Pindaric forms, especially, often carried a burthen of irony or something stronger. Thomas Warton, Lloyd, and others had recognized the opportunity that here awaited recognition.⁹¹ Longer odes likewise pummeled literary affectations; and the eccentric Soame Jenyns, who derived not a few unpleasant trifles from Catullus and Anacreon, wrote "An Ode" ⁹² to prove by example that the form was utterly ridiculous. The Preface to this work is a *reductio ad absurdum* of Edward Young, and reads in part: "Just and lively pictures are the very essence of an ode, as well as of an auction-room, whether there are any proper places to hang them in or not; and such there are in the narrow compass of this little piece, of every thing that is great and beautiful in nature; of the morning rising from

⁹⁰ See *Religious Trends in English Poetry*, by H. N. Fairchild, the final chapter of Vol. I

⁹¹ T. Warton's "Ode to a Grizzle Wig" (Chalmers, XVIII, 125), Mason's "Ode to Mr. Pinchbeck, upon his newly invented Candle-Snuffers"—interesting for its comment on the American Revolution (*ibid.*, XVIII, 414); and Lloyd's "To Oblivion" (*ibid.*, XV, 94)

⁹² Chalmers, XVII, 621 The final stanza reads

Hail, Liberty, fair goddess of this isle!
Deign on my verses, and on me, to smile,
Like them, unfetter'd by the bonds of sense,
Permit us to enjoy life's transient dream,
To live, and write, without the least pretence
To method, order, meaning, plan, or scheme
And shield us safe beneath thy guardian wings,
From law, religion, ministers, and kings

the ocean; of the Sun, the Moon, and the planetary system; of a giant and a hermit; of woods, rocks, and mountains, and the seasons of the revolving year: and in all these, the images are so entirely new, the transitions so sudden and unexpected, so void of all apparent art, yet not without much of that which is quite invisible; the thoughts are so sublime, so distant from all vulgar ideas of common sense, that the judicious reader will scarcely find in it a single deviation from the severest laws of just criticism."⁹³ Jenyns had an associate in Bonnel Thornton, the odd genius already mentioned, whose "Ode to Horror"⁹⁴ poked fun at sundry varieties of Gothic gloom. Thornton's several odes are doubtless the ablest parodies of lyric verse as written in his time.⁹⁵

This levity was fed on the broad pastures of current literature. So ubiquitous had the ode become that no ceremony and no occasion was left unadorned. Academic festivals throughout the English-speaking world summoned the learned ode writer to the fore. Schoolboys and college men penned—and still pen—odes to embellish the graduation exercises. When General Wolfe died taking Quebec, a deluge of elegiac and encomiastic odes submerged the journals and papers.⁹⁶ James Thomson's memory was kept green for generations in his native Ednam with odes written and declaimed.⁹⁷ When the Society for Constitutional Information gathered, it voiced its defense of civic virtue in forms bequeathed by the ancient bards. Thus at one anniversary dinner of the Society, Mr. Webb sang an "Ode in Imitation of Callistratus," and ap-

⁹³ *Ibid.*, XVII, 620, the Preface is interesting also for its quotation from Trapp, that stern critic of ode writers and their methodical madness

⁹⁴ Quoted from the *Student* (Vol II, No 8) by H O White in *London Times Literary Supplement* (Jan 12, 1922).

⁹⁵ The most interesting parody of the choral ode of Greek tragedy is doubtless the "Fragment of a Greek Tragedy," written by A E Housman for the *Cornhill Magazine*, which published it in April, 1901. It was reprinted in the *New York Herald Tribune Books* (June 14, 1936)

⁹⁶ See *Owen's Weekly Chronicle, or Universal Journal*, Vol II (London, 1759).

⁹⁷ Mackail, *Studies of English Poets*, p 108

parently managed the following troublesome stanza without a flutter :

Thus, Harmodius, shine thy blade!
Thus Aristogiton, thine!
Whose, when Britain sighs for aid,
Whose shall now delay to shine? ⁹⁸

The number of such appeals is legion, and the writer of literary comedy did not lack material.

Thence to beyond the close of the century the quantity if not the quality of fugitive odes is astonishing. All subjects were duly celebrated: the universe, the day of judgment, the monarch's benevolent intentions, the merits of a famed sleeping powder.⁹⁹ John Freeth's "Ode on Inland Navigation" ¹⁰⁰ commemorated the arrival of the first boatload of coals. It is, of course, true that a number of respectable odes were written, though it was seldom that the authors penned anything rivaling the two short odes of Cowper,¹⁰¹ which virtually brought the period to a close. The great miscellany of the period was Dodsley's *Collection of Poems* ¹⁰² in the first volumes of which two odes by Gray were introduced to the

⁹⁸ *Tracts Published and Distributed Gratis by the Society for Constitutional Information* (London, 1783), Vol I, Part II, No 1 The scene was the Shakespeare Tavern, London, the date, May 14, 1782

⁹⁹ *The Autobiography, Times, Opinions and Contemporaries of Sir Egerton Brydges* (London, 1834) Brydges quotes (I, 418) from a letter by Lord Tenterden "One of the earliest [i.e., of his Horatian experiments] is an 'Ode on the Conservatory,' in the Alcaic metre, of which the last stanza contains the true cause and excuse of the whole, and this I will now transcribe. Another of the earliest is an ode in the Sapphic metre on the 'Concallaria Maialis,' the Lily of the Valley I have seen one little ode, written this year, on a plant called the 'Linnaea Borealis.'"

¹⁰⁰ See *Johnson's England*, edited by A S Turberville (Oxford, 1933), I, 149 The ode reads in part

And sure that plan must be of noble use,
Which tends in price provisions to reduce

¹⁰¹ Chalmers, Vol XVIII

¹⁰² *A Collection of Poems by Several Hands*, Vols I-III, edited by Robert Dodsley (London, 1748) Of particular interest here is Mendez' *Supplement* containing (*inter alia*) "On Mr Walpole's House at Strawberry Hill," by Miss M—

public. It is a vast magazine of assorted occasional odes, but it is also a repository of evidence to the effect that the ambitions and theories of ode writers were familiar targets. Older notions of the ode as a *beau désordre* persisted among the humorists, as witness Smollett's hero's ability to tell a writer of one by the "distracted stare" on his countenance.¹⁰³ Horace Walpole, whose Press was midwife to Gray's verse, was often a harassed and satirical critic. Finally he reported that even his dog had taken to ode writing, and was doing one in the classical style.¹⁰⁴ The note persists with Cowper. Meaning that he is distracted as he writes his letter, he says,¹⁰⁵ "I am very Pindaric, and obliged to be so by the hurry of the hour." Rougher notes were sounded, too, as witness an "Ode to Daphnis, a Puppy, Playing with Myrtila in Bed," by a Mr. Stacie, in the *Cabinet for Wit*.¹⁰⁶

The satirical ode—or ode diverted to the uses of satire—was another speciality of the period. It had a somewhat earlier

¹⁰³ *Peregrine Pickle* (Everyman edition), p. 231. The passage reads in part "he could distinguish by their countenances the different kinds of poetry in which they exercised the muse. He saw tragedy conspicuous in a grave solemnity of regard . . . Ode-writing delineated in a distracted stare, and Epigram squinting in a pert sneer."

¹⁰⁴ Walpole was an incisive critic of Gray's odes. The standard edition is that by Mrs. Paget Toynbee (London, 1903-5). The passage referred to here may be more conveniently found by consulting *Selected Letters of Horace Walpole* (Everyman edition), p. 316.

¹⁰⁵ *Selected Letters of William Cowper* (Everyman edition), p. 116. Cowper also writes (p. 71) "I have received an anonymous complimentary Pindaric Ode from a little poet who calls himself a schoolboy."

¹⁰⁶ *The Cabinet for Wit or, an Infallible Recipe to Cure Stupidity*, by Timothy Sharpe (London, 1751). A jest at the expense of Gray's *Selima* may be implied.

Gentle Whelp, all Whelps excelling,
Let us change awhile our Dwelling
Sighing, pensive take our Stand,
Grow a Lover out of Hand,
Silent, breathing, much desiring,
Seem for me a Wretch expiring;
While some God, that hears my Wishes—
Happiest thou of S— of —
Lays me in thy Form conceal'd
On her lovely Breast reveal'd

devotee in Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, whose "A New Ode to a Great Number of Great Men, Newly Made" is a good example of his ability.¹⁰⁷ Williams was fond of the six-line hymn stanza. But it is with the name of William Gifford that the art of the satirical ode on political topics is most intimately associated. His own *Maeviad*, written to ridicule the Della-Cruscans,¹⁰⁸ established his reputation. It was, however, as the editor of *Probationary Odes*,¹⁰⁹ which took advantage of Thomas Warton's appointment to the laureateship in order to foist an imaginary competitive ode upon each Tory minister, that he contributed most to the store of English wit. The odes are both pointed and ribald. They vary in quality as in decency, but the tone was far more urbane than was that of even the more refined "State Poems" of Dryden's time; and one or two, especially that attributed to Sir Cecil Wray, are excellent fun. In 1797 Gifford returned to the charge: taking advantage of the anti-Whig sentiment fostered by the outbreak of the French Revolution, he recruited a coterie of brilliant writers for the *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner*.¹¹⁰ The verse written for this short-lived journal has had its readers in every generation since. It was in all probability not designed to be a collection of parodies on the ode forms, but the half-dozen burlesques of Augustan patterns serve the purpose admirably.

Still more popular, however, were the numerous satirical odes of Peter Pindar (John Wolcot), whose productions were

¹⁰⁷ *The Works of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams* (London, n. d.)

¹⁰⁸ The date was 1795. Robert Merry, generalissimo of the Della-Cruscans, published his *Laurel of Liberty* in 1790. The ladies took up the idea, the principal convert being Hannah More, author of tracts galore and some verses. Gifford attacked Merry primarily because the *Laurel of Liberty* endorsed the French Revolution.

¹⁰⁹ *The Rolliad, in Two Parts, Probationary Odes for the Laureateship, and Political Miscellanies with Criticisms and Illustrations* (London, 1795).

¹¹⁰ *Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin*, edited by L. Rice-Oxley (Oxford, 1924). Among the best poems are No. XVIII (p. 70), a pseudo-imitation of Horace, Book III, Ode XXV, directed chiefly against Sir Robert Adair and his chief, Fox, and No. XXII, "The Jacobin" (p. 84).

issued singly or in groups from 1782 to 1817.¹¹¹ To men of his time he seemed a person of great genius but of dubious taste; and Wordsworth himself paid his respects¹¹² to so vigorous and influential a writer. To his enemies he seemed, of course, a veritable epitome of "impiety, obscenity, impudence, etc."¹¹³ Such writing is necessarily bound to fade with time, but if one takes the trouble to reconstruct the circumstances under which they were written several of Peter Pindar's "odes" will even yet prove highly amusing. Thus "The Progress of Curiosity; or a Royal Visit to Whitbread's Brewery" is a satire on both Warton and the King which throws much light on feelings current at the close of the century. Well planned, written with mordancy round a mordant theme, the average Pindar effusion nevertheless lacks grooming and distinction. The "Lyric Odes" are ventures in art criticism, not unlike (except in form) what one can find in certain metropolitan newspapers of the twentieth century. "More Money; or Odes of Instruction to Mr. Pitt" show Peter Pindar at his best as a political writer.

Rejected Addresses,¹¹⁴ which appeared when the Romantic movement was well under way, is in several respects the

¹¹¹ *The Works of Peter Pindar* (London, 1830)

¹¹² *The Early Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, edited by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford, 1935), p. 156 Wordsworth wrote to William Mathews, on March 21, 1796 "what shall be said of Boileau, and Pope, and the redoubted Peter? These are great names"

¹¹³ See *The Pursuits of Literature* (12th edition, London, 1803), p. 49 The author (James Mathias) launches a vicious attack on Pye, the Laureate "Mr Pye, the present Poet Laureate, with the best intentions at this momentous period, if not with the very best poetry, translated the verses of Tyrtæus the Spartan They were designed to produce animation throughout the Kingdom, and among the Militia in particular Several of the *Reviewing Generals* (I do not mean the Monthly or Critical) were much impressed with their *weight* or importance, and at a board of General Officers, an experiment was agreed upon, which unfortunately failed They were read aloud at Warley Common, and at Barham Downs by the Adjutants, at the head of five different regiments, at each camp, and much was expected But before they were half finished, all the front ranks, and as many of the others as were within hearing or verse shot, dropped their arms suddenly and were all found fast asleep"

¹¹⁴ *Rejected Addresses, or the New Theatrum Poetarum*, by Horace and James Smith (London, 1876) Other examples can be found in Bond, *English Burlesque Poetry, passim*

masterpiece of parody writing in the ode form. The occasion for the book was a prize poem contest staged by Drury Lane Theater; and the mock verses submitted are of diverse kinds. "Punch's Apotheosis," by T. H., is an admirable burlesque of the cantata ode. It appropriately concludes a hasty survey of a *genre* which developed because of abuses to which a worthy poetic form was subjected by reason of academic routine and literary inadequacy.¹¹⁵ The phenomenon has its parallel in every age. Shakespeare drubbed the Euphuists in their own style, as Aristophanes had assailed the Sophists of his day.

Viewed as a whole, the work of the lesser ode writers of the period reflects the same tendencies which were more sharply and brilliantly embodied in the lyric verse of those great poets who gave the Romantic movement enduring significance.

¹¹⁵ A brief note concerning the pre-nineteenth-century ode in American literature may be appended here. Inevitably English models and tendencies were imitated. Early anthologies show fewer odes than might have been anticipated, the balance being heavily in favor of epistles. Thus *The Columbian Muse* (Philadelphia, 1794) contains two odes by David Humphreys in six-line stanzas (pp. 116, 119). A representative individual poet, Philip Freneau, wrote odes that are somewhat primitive in construction but nevertheless convey emotion. See *Poems of Freneau*, edited by Harry Hayden Clark (New York, 1929).

CHAPTER NINE: *The Ode and the Blue Flower*

OLDER popular impressions that English poetry suddenly awakened from a long sleep during the Romantic period have now been so thoroughly discounted that the critical historian almost feels impelled to preface whatever he wishes to say about the early nineteenth century with a few timid words of endorsement. It cannot, to be sure, be the purpose of this chapter to discuss at length the ideological implications of Romanticism. Our object is to study the evolution of a form, not the evolution of emotions and philosophies. It must suffice to indicate that most of the great poets whose work we shall consider were attuned to Neo-Platonic attitudes, in the sense that they thought an intuitive grasp of reality had widened for them the area of human experience. "Nature" was now not a norm merely but also an avenue of approach to man and his significance. As they proceeded down that rather labyrinthine road, the poets caught (or believed they caught) glimpses of the meaning of life, which they then dutifully expounded for the benefit of the less fortunate. This assumed ability to look into the heart of things did influence the forms in which they wrote, even as awareness of a lofty purpose has always shaped the utterance men have given to their thought. Would Bossuet have fashioned the *style oratoire* if he had not felt himself to be the mouthpiece of Divine truth? And could Shakespeare have written as he did, had he not been conscious of his ability to hold the mirror up to nature?

But if one is, as we are here, concerned primarily with poetic expression, one is compelled by the evidence to admit that the major poets of the Romantic time seldom were innovators in the sense that they devised new verse patterns. As a matter of fact, one sees while reading them that they were surprisingly content to store their harvest in familiar hives, and that most of them were even satisfied with the poetic schemata bequeathed by their immediate precursors. Byron's couplets and Wordsworth's Pindarick verse are lasting reminders of the permanent impact of the past, however arguable it may be that Walt Whitman was the inevitable ultimate result of the Romantic mood. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the emphasis was all on new theories of the poet and his material, not on revolutionary formal ideals. Yet, of course, this acceptance of the old by men whose eyes were fixed on the new implied a certain negligence of and indifference to the conventional principles of structure. Old bottles were broken as the new wine was poured. Putting stanzaic arrangements to work, the poets often bothered not a whit about the labels those arrangements bore. At the appointed time, the ode in particular would no longer be the ode of yesteryear.

Of especial importance in so far as the ode is concerned was the Romantic cult of the exotic.¹ What has been noted as

¹ No bibliography of Romanticism need be drawn up here. The emphasis placed on *exotisme* may, however, require a brief explanation. It is the writer's conviction that purely stylistic considerations played a part in the development of Romantic poetry, though it was doubtless less important than the influence of thinkers and scientists. Wordsworth read a treatise on the association of ideas. Yes, but he was also weary of poetic diction and therefore interested in the "speech of common men." As a consequence he quite naturally turned to the sources whence that speech arose. Writing,

One impulse from the vernal wood,
Can teach thee more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can,

he was less concerned with setting up a system of thought which Professor Babbitt would later demolish with ease than with iterating, no doubt with some exaggeration, the simple fact that there are times when the routine phrases of this or that branch of study are not half so striking as is an idea that pops into one's head during a leisurely stroll. Of Shelley it has been said that he had

a tendency in connection with writers as diverse as Dyer, Joseph Warton, Collins, and Gray must now be described as a dominant trend. The charm of classical culture had faded; and on all sides there was felt a desire to discover beauty of language, feeling, and doctrine in varied negations of classicism. English ode writers turned in the main to six kinds of exotic material, and each kind was bound to modify considerably both the language of poetry and the form that language was given in verse. These were: the Gaelic or pseudo-Gaelic in its many varieties, as Burns, Mangan, and Yeats testify; homely English speech, close to nature and the handicrafts, of which Wordsworth was (at least in theory) the chief advocate; the spiritual realm of a half-imaginary, half-real Greece, in which Keats made himself at home; the beckoning reaches of revolutionary theory, on which Byron and Shelley tried to find a precarious perch; the Gothic past (or what was fancied to have been the Gothic past), which haunted men's minds until well after the days of Tennyson; and the mystery of the Orient, which played a not inconspicuous part in ode history. Doubtless there were subsidiary regions, either of the intellect or the imagination. And of course there are sharp differences between one reader's awareness of a given kind of exoticism and another's. One who has read much German literature will not find the Teutonism of Beddoes as strange as the average contemporary of Keats must have found his Atticism. Yet in

a confused mind and a troublesome amatory impulse. The second need concern us only in so far as we note that he had an "age of sentiment" behind him and could not treat his women as Prior (for example) treated his. The first is engrossing because among the manifestations of Shelley's trouble was his detestation of cant and his inability to let anything lie which might cause a verbal explosion. Doubtless he had to be the kind of man he was to sense the charm of dictional firecrackers so keenly; and I believe that as he grew older Shelley began to realize that the great masters had stowed away in their verse some quite effective varieties of dynamite. Naturally all this (and more that could be said) does not in any way disparage worthy efforts to study the ideas and ideals of Romantic poets. But it should not be forgotten that literature is to a very considerable extent an affair of language.

each and every instance there was a departure from the older humanistic tradition into a land of "shady visions come to domineer."

Of Coleridge, the first of the important Romantic poets, it might be said that he was what more modern times have called an "escapist." His mind revolted against boundaries of period and place. Nevertheless he had a closer spiritual affinity with the past than with the future. From early youth he was an indefatigable but unsystematic reader; a student of poetic form, and even a stickler for metrical law;² a person of generous, ardent, but ungovernable impulses; and, almost in the manner of the seventeenth century, an addict to religious and philosophical speculation. It was only natural that the era in which he lived, when England was more awake to the ideologies of the Continent than at any time since the reign of Elizabeth and when difficulties of a dozen kinds were matters of general social concern, should have excited his mind unduly. He is doubtless a classic instance of the dire consequences of overstimulation. And yet, despite all this, he was, in so far as the forms of poetry are concerned, much more conventional than Crashaw, Cowley, or Collins.³ The irregular or Pindarick ode was from first to last a favorite with him, though for various reasons he failed to achieve perfection in any one instance.

As a youthful poet, Coleridge subscribed to the theory of "the boldness of Pindaric daring." He wanted to write odes on the wonders of Creation, and in this "orphyic" mood did compose a "Hymn to the Earth" after the manner of Callimachus, and part of a "Hymn to the Sun."⁴ His "Monody

² See, for example, "Specimens of the Table-Talk of Samuel Coleridge," in *Table Talk by Various Writers from Ben Jonson to Leigh Hunt*, edited by J. C. Thornton (London, 1934), p. 183.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 247. "I think there is something very majestic in Gray's 'Installation Ode,' but as to the 'Bard' and the rest of his lyrics, I must say I think them frigid and artificial. There is more real feeling in Cotton's 'Ode to Winter'."

⁴ *The Poetical and Dramatic Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (New York, 1853), p. 31.

on the Death of Chatterton" ⁵ was a brilliant essay in the tradition established by Milton and revived by Lyttelton. There was also no doubt in his mind that the Pindarick form lent itself well to burlesque and buffoonery, as an ode on "The Nose" and a dithyramb anent mathematics ⁶ satisfactorily prove. But much greater interest attaches to the "Song of the Pixies," written in 1793, which is a metrical *tour de force* despite the veritable heap of clichés which disfigure it.⁷ In this poem the prosodic structure of the later, incomparably more beautiful "Kubla Khan" ⁸ is clearly discernible.

A comparison of the two poems will show that in both cases regular stanzas alternate with irregular ones. In other words, like the longer odes of Collins, they are based on Pindarick models. But in the "Song of the Pixies" Coleridge was on the whole still conforming with the metrical practice of the rhetorical poets. He relied upon inverted first feet for variety; his rhymes are masculine and are scattered about artificially, with just enough nonchalance to avoid monotony; and he clung predominately to tetrameter lines. The workmanship is, broadly speaking, not unlike that of Collins.⁹ But in "Kubla Khan" the trend is markedly towards pentameter; the abundant feminine rhymes in the long second stanza give the poem its peculiar lightness and rapidity of movement; the inversions occur only in the lyric passages; and in the regular sections beautiful effects are achieved, for example, by opposing an initial spondee to a terminal feminine rhyme, as in the line,

Five miles meandering with a mazy motion.⁹

⁵ Here are the famous lines,

Yet will I love to follow the sweet dream

Where Susquehanna pours his untamed stream,

which show (*inter alia*) the influence of Thomson.

⁶ Young Coleridge was never in such high spirits as here.

⁷ In his Introduction, Coleridge terms this an "Irregular Ode." By reason of its epithets and its use of abstractions, the poem is reminiscent of earlier decades.

⁸ According to Coleridge, this poem was written during 1797.

⁹ Another example may be adduced:

It flung up momentarily the sacred river.

The advance thus achieved over the earlier "Song of the Pixies" is quite as distinct and notable as is the progress made by Keats between the *Psyche* and *Nightingale* odes. Though "Kubla Khan" unfortunately remains a fragment, it is perhaps the clearest demonstration of what the Romantic poets actually did in ode writing—successful deviation from neoclassical patterns for the sake of metrical nuances detected by the poet's ear; a dwindling of emphasis upon logical structure in order to secure greater freedom in the utterance of feeling; and modification of the practice of arranging images in parallel, because of a new-found interest in the composition of imagery.¹⁰

Coleridge's more formal odes suffer, often quite considerably, from the rhetoric associated with this kind of writing since Dryden's time. The best in execution is doubtless "France,"¹¹ and it is also another in the long list of worthy autobiographical odes. This ode is monostrophic, the stanza of twenty-one lines varying five- and four-stress lines flexibly and melodiously. There is too much exclamation for modern tastes, and there are dictional blemishes. Nevertheless, it is of a piece throughout, and illustrates anew the metrical virtuosity we have noted in connection with the "Song of the Pixies." The "Ode to the Departing Year"¹² is more elaborate in structure, but the poetic diction (as well as the prosody) is derivative, and the epithets dangle from the edges like wet flags in the rain. "Dejection"¹³ is further proof, if that were needed, that Cowley's form is admirably suited to the expres-

¹⁰ To some extent this was doubtless the product of Miltonic influence, just as was (on a lower plane) the practice of inverting initial feet

¹¹ H. N. Coleridge, in the *Quarterly Review* (Vol. LII, No. CIII, pp. 1-38), quotes Medwin to the effect that Shelley had pronounced this "the finest English ode of modern times." John Charpentier, in *Coleridge, the Sublime Somnambulist*, translated by M. V. Nugent (New York, 1929), p. 49, calls attention to the "metaphysical" character of Coleridge's conception of liberty in this poem.

¹² Coleridge's prefatory note indicates that he believed this to be a Pindaric poem. He speaks of strophes, antistrophes, and epodes. It is nevertheless a Pindarick, since the various parts do not conform metrically.

¹³ There are eight irregular stanzas; five-stress lines predominate.

sion of autobiographical meditation. The second stanza is doubtless the most Wordsworthian fragment in Coleridge's poetry, and it comes near to being the most beautiful. These lines will always have their honored place in any history of the English ode:

And those thin clouds above, in flakes and bars,
That give away their motion to the stars;
Those stars, that glide behind them or between,
Now sparkling, now bedimmed, but always seen:
Yon crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue;
I see them all so excellently fair,
I see, not feel, how beautiful they are!

The "Ode to Georgiana" is interesting prosodically by reason of its trochaic interludes and its refrain, but has all the usual shortcomings of occasional poetry. The "Hymn before Sunrise, in the Vale of Chamouni" is a good blank verse ode, but it shows that Coleridge saw in nature little more than a stage setting against the background of which he could voice reflection and prayer—prayer suggesting a Psalmist enamored of metaphysics, his own emotional responses, and the slim chance that the "pathetic fallacy" might not be a fallacy, after all.¹⁴ These remarks may seem to fall very short of lavish praise. Yet, though Coleridge's odes all have defects, they do surpass in melodiousness and value all Pindarick verse written between Collins' time and his own. In addition they stress a new note of passionate autobiographical reflection.✓

¹⁴ The influence of the Psalmist (and of the hymn concluding Thomson's *Seasons*) is evident in these lines

Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?—
God! let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing ye meadow-streams with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Coleridge's friend Wordsworth was from the beginning a "man with a mission," and therefore naturally interested in forms which promised to convey his teaching most effectively. His was, however, an extraordinary receptiveness to intuitions and images which arose out of the contemplation of nature. The ballad, for example, was to him no mere instrument for conveying the blissful simplicities of rural life, as it happened to be for Bloomfield,¹⁵ among others, but a device for filtering out bookishness and conventional feeling. Fondness for meditative introspection of itself suggested recourse to "lines," and there were times when a sudden surge of emotion called for expression in a short lyric that was almost a hymn. Now and then Wordsworth also turned to the ode, and his work in it is of three kinds. The Pindarick he resorted to infrequently. His treatment of the Miltonic or Jonsonian ode is on the whole rather undistinguished, with one notable exception. And his shorter odes raise difficult and interesting questions.

Proceeding to the Pindarick group, we may note first the monostrophic "Composed upon an Evening of Extraordinary Splendour and Beauty."¹⁶ It was written relatively late, permits few variations from the tetrameter-pentameter pattern, and doubtless testifies to a growing predilection for blank verse. But the lines and the images are moving; and in them the person of religious temperament will find expressed, extravagantly but sincerely, the analogy between perceived beauty and Divine radiance. A comparison is suggested with Isaac Watts's "Earth and Heaven." Wordsworth writes:

Wings at my shoulders seem to play;
But, rooted here, I stand and gaze
On those bright steps that heavenward raise

¹⁵ *Wild Flowers, or, Pastoral and Local Poetry*, by Robert Bloomfield (London, 1816). Such poems as "A Visit to Ranleagh" were sometimes referred to as "odes," but there is little reason for the designation.

¹⁶ *Poems*, by William Wordsworth (London, 1807), is the first collected edition. *Poems of Early and Late Years* appeared in 1842. Convenient modern texts are the two volumes in Everyman's Library. The poem in question was written during 1818. See James Thomson's "Hymn," Chalmers, XII, 453.

Their practicable way.

Come forth, ye drooping old men, look around,
And see to what fair countries ye are bound!

And Watts, more Scriptural and other-worldly, writes,

Look up, my soul, pant tow'rd th' eternal hills;
Those Heavens are fairer than they seem,
There pleasures all sincere glide on in crystal rills,
There not a dreg of guilt defiles,
Nor grief disturbs the stream,
That Canaan knows no noxious thing,
No cursed soil, no tainted spring,
Nor roses grow on thorns, nor honey wears a sting.¹⁷

The "Immortality Ode" is the only one of Wordsworth's poems which can be termed irregular.¹⁸ We are left to conclude that he was happiest when working in set patterns which he could then fill with his own "recollected" emotion. The stanza, not the poem, appears to have been, for him, the dominant unit. Thus, though there is no part of the "Immortality Ode" which a perceptive reader will regard as less than precious, it might well have stopped at the close of the fifth, or surely of the tenth, stanza and still have seemed a unified whole. Indeed, it was written in two parts, sundered from each other by a gulf of years.¹⁹ We also know that Wordsworth sought to alter the poem in order to bring out more clearly the orthodoxy of his later years;²⁰ and though it is hard to believe he could have succeeded, he might conceivably have added a stanza without ruining the whole. Even so these manifest cleavages serve to give symmetry and breadth to the experi-

¹⁷ Chalmers, XIII, 22

¹⁸ The last stanzas are, of course, more regular than the first

¹⁹ The first four stanzas were written in 1803, the last seven in 1806

²⁰ Aubrey De Vere is authority for the statement that Wordsworth tried to revise the ode to satisfy doubters of his orthodoxy, but that neither he nor his friends were able to endorse the changes proposed. See *Aubrey De Vere a Memoir*, by Wilfrid Ward (London, 1910), p. 392, and *William Wordsworth of Rydal Mount*, by Frederika Beatty (London, 1939), p. 212.

ences expressed, largely because the ode is expressionistic,²¹ though the expressionism does not derive, as does Dryden's "Alexander's Feast," from the outside (that is, from the suggestions latent in the theme and in the music), but from the inside (that is, from the poet's shifting thought and emotion). There are at least six variations of this kind, all managed with perfect conformity between the mood and the utterance.²² This was not an entirely new principle in ode composition, as witness the work of Collins. But never before had the consequences which follow from adoption of the principle been so clearly educed. The "Immortality Ode" is from many points of view the noblest English Pindarick. It was Keats's guiding star, and it will remain a beacon to poets centuries hence.²³ |

Few will look with much favor upon Wordsworth's other experiments in Pindarick verse. Aubrey De Vere liked the "Vernal Ode,"²⁴ which caught up something of Spenser's best rhythm, but it is certainly no general favorite. A resemblance

²¹ By "expressionistic" is meant "formally dependent upon the mood, emotion or idea expressed." The word has been used recently in the same sense in scholarly comment. See "Lord Jeffrey and Wordsworth," by Joseph M. Beatty, Jr., in *PMLA*, XXXVIII, 221-35.

²² Saintsbury (*English Prosody*, III, 73) objects that the line

My head hath its coronal

"at once jolts the whole scheme out of rhythm." But surely that is what it was intended to do. Ecstasy, the poet's concern at the moment, could be expressed best if the "whole scheme" was changed to suit.

²³ Comment on the ode is plentiful, of course. Crabbe Robinson said (*Diaries* II, 310) "Robinson showed Blake 'Wordsworth's incomparable ode,' which he heartily enjoyed, but he repeated 'I hear Wordsworth loves nature, and nature is the work of the Devil'." The parts of Wordsworth's ode which Blake enjoyed most were the most obscure—at all events those which I least like and comprehend." In a letter to R. W. Dixon, Gerard Manley Hopkins said: "To say it was the second ode in the language was after all a comparative remark one might maintain, though I daresay you will not, that English is not rich in odes. But if the speaker had said that it was one of the dozen or half dozen finest odes of the world I must own that to me there would have seemed no extravagance." See *The Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Richard Watson Dixon*, edited by Claude Collier Abbott (London, 1935) p. 147, and for a modern critic's statement, see *Lyrical Poetry from Blake to Hardy*, by H. J. C. Grierson (London, 1928), pp. 34-36.

²⁴ De Vere, *op. cit.*, p. 235. He also refers (p. 169) to "that grand ode, the 'Pass of Kirkstone'."

to certain cadences dear to Shelley²⁵ may be detected in the second stanza, which begins,

Beneath the shadow of his purple wings,
Rested a golden harp; he touched the strings.

The similarity is curious, and is doubtless based on emotional attitudes common to both poets. The "Thanksgiving Ode," written to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon, has good passages,²⁶ but it shows that Wordsworth was not the man to grace such an occasion with a poem.

The odes composed in regular patterns are cast in familiar stanzas.²⁷ Wordsworth employed a variant of Milton's "Nativity" stanza in the "Ode to Duty," using it with quite epigrammatical austerity.²⁸ The effect of the Alexandrine in these lines is virile and sonorous:

Stern Lawgiver! yet dost thou wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace;
Nor know we anything so fair
As is the smile upon thy face;
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads;
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh and strong.

Excellence of another kind is discernible in "At the Grave of Burns," written in the "four and two" stanza so frequently

²⁵ The similarity is first of all one of metaphorical language. But it is also metrical. The real rhythm of these lines is

Beneath the shadow // of his purple wings
Rested a golden harp, // he touched the strings

This movement is not characteristic of Wordsworth's verse, but can be matched in almost any passage of Shelleyan pentameter.

²⁶ The poem is Drydenesque in structure.

²⁷ The seven-line stanza of "Resolution and Independence" has some kinship to the ode stanza by reason of the final Alexandrine. It also sounds the autobiographical note. Nevertheless I think this fine poem cannot be termed an ode, since the key in which it is written is not traditionally characteristic of the form.

²⁸ Written in 1805, this ode observes the conventions of exclamation and address, but subordinates this to the poem as a whole, which has a self-critical purpose.

employed by the Scottish bard.²⁹ This poem is often overlooked; but though it is uneven of texture and in brilliance, it has some of the best stanzas of their kind in Wordsworth's verse. The last in particular has a magic worthy of the greatest days of the seventeenth century:

Sighing I turned away, but ere
Night fell I heard, or seemed to hear,
Music that sorrow comes not near,
 A ritual hymn
Chanted in love that casts out fear
 By Seraphim.

Here the critic must stress especially the admirable effect of the seemingly insignificant parenthesis, "or seemed to hear," which is incidentally reminiscent of the moth-eaten prosodic devices of the eighteenth century. Its function is to break up the melodic uniformity and to introduce at just the right place a distant, flutelike cadence which then makes the ear receptive to the strong notes of the conclusion. Little need be said concerning the other odes in this group. The "Ode to *Lycoris*" is almost a monostrophic Pindarick. Composed in simple eight-line stanzas, the odes to May are among the tritest of Wordsworth's lyrics.

None of the shorter poems, which form the third group, was termed an "ode" by Wordsworth, but it must not be inferred from this that he did not think of them as odes. Certainly "To the Cuckoo"³⁰ was normally designated an ode in his time, and we may be quite sure that others were similarly described. This practice differs from that of preceding decades, but one can only hazard a guess at an explanation. Wordsworth had set out to reform poetry, and had therefore broken with the genteel assumptions of those who held that the function of verse was to elaborate standard themes in standard ways. Jeffrey, upon whom the mantle of Johnson

²⁹ Wordsworth may have employed this stanza because it had been a favorite with Burns

³⁰ The quatrain stanza is used, the pattern being 4343, with alternating rhymes

was assumed to have fallen, naturally fought the rebel with every weapon at his command; and Wordsworth's retorts let one see a good deal of what he thought concerning some aspects of the ode tradition.³¹ First, he banned the abstractions, and therewith the "passions," together with all that was associated with them.³² Duty, as he spoke of it, was very much more than an abstraction, but he may nevertheless have put the word "ode" into the title out of deference to convention. The cuckoo, the skylark, the small celandine, the daisy and the daffodil were, however, real objects; and since he had vowed to praise the real in real language, he may have wished to disassociate his practice from the artificialities of the period against which he was protesting. Second, Wordsworth exercised a function similar in many respects to Ben Jonson's, though to be sure he more or less stood Jonson's program on its head.³³ That program had been based upon the fact that the wilderness of Elizabethan song made the discipline of the classics imperatively necessary; and now, after more than a hundred years had passed, Wordsworth realized that classical imitation was dying of old age and dignity. Jeffrey's resentment was quite natural.³⁴ Someone had pulled off his wig—he was an antique exposed to the light of common day. But Wordsworth, bent on naturalness of utterance as the prerequisite of art, could successfully insist upon spontaneity because he himself was a traditionalist. At

³¹ See the Preface to the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads*. The texts of this and related utterances are conveniently brought together in *Poetry and Criticism of the Romantic Movement*, edited by O F Campbell, J F A Pyre, and B Weaver (New York, 1932). On the topic under discussion, see especially pp 193 and 200. See also pp. 203-4, the whole of the Appendix of 1802.

³² "The Reader will find that personifications of abstract ideas rarely occur in these volumes, and are utterly rejected as an ordinary device to elevate the style and raise it above prose" *Ibid*, p 195.

³³ Note, however, Wordsworth's emphasis on "manly" style *Ibid*, p 200

³⁴ The critic does not dissent without reservations "But although we cannot bring ourselves to approve of Mr Wordsworth's project for substituting the language of 'low and rustic' life in place of that which we are accustomed to meet with in poetry, yet, in many respects, we feel pretty much disposed to coincide with him in disapproving of the latter" *Ibid*, pp 792-94

any rate, whether these explanations be correct or not, it is a fact that with Wordsworth the shorter ode began to disappear as a genre.

The conclusions to be drawn from Wordsworth's general attitudes are simple. He did not experiment in new rhythms or stanzaic arrangements, being quite content to follow what he thought were the best patterns of his predecessors. The "Immortality Ode" is an innovation only in so far as the formative impulse came from the inner man rather than from outward circumstance. Nevertheless he probably affected the outlook of the future more than did any other writer of odes in his time. Several modern definitions of the word "ode" can be traced to his example: that it is a lyric of an especial solemnity; that it is characterized by a note of address couched in relatively august terms; and that it is written round a "universal" theme. Had he affixed the label to those of his shorter poems which it fits, much might have been different. No doubt it is just as well he did not; for none of these lyrics is classical in character, unless one stresses unduly the element of address. We have seen that virtually all the melic verse of antiquity was addressed to someone, primarily because the forms of ancient rhetoric and music required it. Today the dictum that an ode is—"a poem with a postage stamp attached" is widely accepted without question. Yet the phrase applies to the "Immortality Ode" only quite indirectly, and to Dryden's "Harmony Ode" not at all. I would do no good to quarrel with this verbal evolution. The Romantic poets were so close to the classical tradition that they accepted the element of address as a matter of course and we of the present are so remote from it that that element seems a thing established in its own right.

Wordsworth's practice very considerably influenced all the major poets younger than himself, with the exception of Lord Byron. And it is interesting to observe that Byron though fully as dissatisfied with the prevailing literary banal

ity as any other writer, never drew up what might be termed a "program of constructive poetical ideas." Instead he did what he liked—and it was a good deal—in forms that seldom exacted much nice workmanship. The consequence was that, in so far as his lyric verse is concerned, he was sometimes novel, often striking, and almost always slovenly. The most nearly perfect short ode he wrote (for there can be little doubt that it is an ode) is "On This Day I Complete My Thirty-Sixth Year."³⁵ This lyric is hammered out on the great anvil of Marvell and Horace, but the mold breaks in Byron's hands. A glance will show that the notable swiftness, turbulence of the poem is due to the fact that he makes feet out of syllables which in older practice would have been elided:

The sword, the banner, and the field,
 Glory and Greece, around me see!
 The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
 Was not more free.

These lines derive not a little of their impressive impetuosity from the juxtaposition of words like "banner" and "glory" with the monosyllable "and." If the threefold "the" were eliminated from the first line, only three stresses would remain. Marvell would not have been satisfied with such workmanship. It is content solely—the impact of autobiographical reflection—which makes the poem acceptable.

Byron's longer odes suffer from a persistent readiness to consider his experiences and ideas more important than the language in which they are enshrined. "To Venice," written in decasyllables arranged for the most part in pairs rhyming alternately, is a spirited essay-ode. Some of the lines are meaty and strong. Yet it is a rare reader who will not wish this

³⁵ As has been indicated, the term "ode" was disappearing as a designation applied to short lyrics. For the texts of Byron's poems, see *The Works of Lord Byron*, edited by Ernest H. Coleridge (London, 1903). The final stanza of this ode is spoiled by the line, "Then look around, and choose thy ground," which sounds perilously like real-estate advertising.

poem had been written in poetic prose, without the apparatus of rhymes that seem fortuitous and of personified Vices and Virtues.³⁶ "The Prisoner of Chillon" raises a new question. It is undoubtedly a Pindarick, mated to a narrative purpose in a manner for which there was precedent; and it may be looked upon as one of the most successful of all endeavors to use Cowley's form pseudo-autobiographically. Possibly Byron's model had been Southey, who turned the Pindarick form to new use. Thus "The Triumph of Life," which opens with a passage in heroic verse, shifts to an irregular ode stanza and then moves into blank verse.³⁷ Or conceivably the impulse may have been given by Coleridge's prefatory remarks³⁸ on the meters of "Christabel." To be sure, it is impossible to assert that Byron was thinking of the Pindarick form as he wrote "The Prisoner of Chillon." Nor can one answer the query whether some of his longer poems in regular stanzas, especially those in which there is an element of address, are properly odes. The word had ceased to be genuinely important.³⁹

While Byron contributes little to the history of the ode, Shelley adds a good deal that is individual and novel. He was the first major poet (unless one excepts Blake) to cut himself off from the classical-humanist tradition. In early youth he

³⁶ Gosse included this poem in his *English Odes*. A good deal of it is rhetorical and conventional, some of the rhymes are meretricious.

³⁷ See Schipper, *Englische Metrik*, II, 813. Metrically the poem is likewise indebted to Walter Scott. The ramifications of the Pindarick form are endless in modern poetry. It seems unnecessary to mention here any that lie outside the pale of ode history.

³⁸ These remarks were published at Byron's insistence.

³⁹ Byron's other lengthier odes include "Ode from the French" (*Works*, III, 431), which in a letter to Murray he termed his "Ode to Waterloo" and to which there is an occasional additional reference in his correspondence (in *The Works of Lord Byron*, edited by W. E. Henley, *Letters*, 1804-1813, pp. 39, 147, 334); "Monody on the Death of the Right Hon. R. B. Sheridan" (*Works*, IV, 69), which was read at Drury Lane Theater on September 7, 1816, and is written in elegiac couplets; and "Ode to a Lady" (*ibid.*, IV, 552). Byron's early work as published in *Fugitive Pieces* (New York: Facsimile Text Society edition, 1913) includes some poems addressed to persons, e.g., "To Mary," but uses the word "ode" only in connection with two translations from Catullus.

was a disciple of Gothic romancers and German devotees of the weird.⁴⁰ How impulsive his self-absolution from the bonds of literary discipline really was can, however, be seen to best advantage in his first published verse,⁴¹ in which the models are all Romantic and the forms divorced so sharply from the basic Horatian quatrain that they survive not as molds but as amorphous shapes which he sought to cut into patterns suited to his own lyric ideas. The sonnets to Harriet,⁴² modeled on Coleridge, are not sonnets at all but helter-skelter quatorzains. Nevertheless Shelley did not succumb to the charms of the exotic, as Beddoes,⁴³ for instance, did. Gradually he felt his way to the long and supple stanzas with which the great bulk of his work is identified. By 1816 he had, largely by reason of the experience gained in writing *Queen Mab* and *Alastor*, mastered lyric verse to the extent indicated by the "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (which is a rather tinny ode)⁴⁴ and the far better "Mont Blanc."⁴⁵ The

⁴⁰ *Shelley His Life and Work*, by Walter Edwin Peck (Boston, 1927), I, 21 ff

⁴¹ *Original Poetry*, by Victor and Cazire, edited by Richard Garnett (New York, 1908) See Peck, *op cit*, I, 31 ff, and Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, III, 113 ff

⁴² *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by George E. Woodberry (Boston, 1901), p 339

⁴³ *The Works of Thomas Lowell Beddoes*, edited by H. W. Donner (Oxford, 1935) In one of the Prefaces (p 535), Beddoes satirizes "appeals to the classical taste of the polished world, who have learned the Odes of Horace by heart at Eton" His conception of the ode is made clear in a letter to Procter, April 19, 1829 (p. 642), which reads in part: "I am, alas! a little partial, for Cowley was the first poetical writer whom I learned to understand . . . If I could rhyme well and order complicated verse harmoniously, I would try odes, but it's too difficult" A good instance of what Beddoes derived from the ode form is the "Song" from "later versions of *Death's Jest-Book and Other Poems*" (p 107)

⁴⁴ For this and other poems cited, see *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, edited by Mrs. Shelley (London, 1839).

⁴⁵ The stanzas are of uneven length; the rhyme-scheme varies. Of interest is the "catalogue effect" achieved by enumerating in parallel the things each stanza suggests. This is possibly a Romantic modification of the old parallelism device, and may point the way toward Walt Whitman. Note from stanza iv.

The fields, the lakes, the forests and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the daedal earth, lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane.

second poem, which owes a debt to Coleridge and Wordsworth, is written in five-stress rhythms. A tendency towards regularity is one of the notable characteristics of Shelley not as an ode writer merely but as a poetic craftsman. He must often have written rapidly, breathlessly; but he was seldom tempted to be what one might term "asymmetrical," and when he succumbed to that lure he usually failed.

In 1819, Shelley began to employ the word "ode" freely. The "Ode to Heaven"⁴⁶ still has some affinity with the *Queen Mab* style, but might really be the chorus of some strange idealistic play. The "Ode to the West Wind" followed, binding together three-line clusters of long-drawn-out, melodious iambs into what could almost be sonnets—a strange, unparalleled hybrid of Renaissance and Romance, having little in common with traditional ode forms save the element of address. True enough, there had been *terza rima* odes aplenty in the seventeenth century, but Shelley's rhythm, which makes the middle rhyme of each triad the dominant rhyme of the next stanza, is not *terza rima*.⁴⁷ Nevertheless it is a mistake to print the poem in groups of fourteen lines, as is sometimes done.⁴⁸ At any rate, when Shelley so confused the metrical *genres* he asserted individuality brilliantly, indeed, but the structure of his ode is not an innovation, since neither he nor any other poet successfully attempted to copy the pattern. No doubt one should add that this ode is further evidence to show that in turning to the Renaissance forms the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries apparently made no very clear theoretical distinction between the sonnet and the ode.

⁴⁶ This ode has a kind of strophe, with two antistrophes, and an epode. The terms are, however, not employed.

⁴⁷ On *terza rima*, see the Preface to *The Divine Comedy*, translated by Jefferson Butler Fletcher (New York, 1931). Yet this ode must rank among the poems inspired in part by Dantean example and, of course, among the great autobiographical odes.

⁴⁸ For example, in *English Poetry of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by G. R. Elliott and Norman Foerster (New York, 1923).

The next year brought a still more notable achievement—"To a Skylark." Milton and Jonson would have recognized the stanza, though possibly with a gasp. The 33336 pattern is not unlike the 333336 scheme of Jonson's "Ode to Himself."⁴⁹ But never, surely, was a final Alexandrine appended to so expressionistically conceived a group of four lines as in Shelley's ode. They shift from two to three real stresses, and from masculine to feminine rhyme, with all the agility of the bird they celebrate; and yet the pattern is repeated throughout the poem with marked regularity, the variations serving only to heighten one's awareness of the quite inflexible cadence. True enough, this is a six-line stanza disguised; but the exquisite timing would be spoiled, both for the ear and the eye (which in reading the ear could never do without) by disruption of the Alexandrine.⁵⁰

As Shelley's insight into the true meaning of poetic expression deepened, he acquired a greater reverence for the established models of literary art. It is notable, however, that there was a flaw in almost every mold he used. Thus the "Ode to Naples," a very beautiful poem in the strict metrical sense, was carefully sprinkled with Pindaric symbols.⁵¹ They are, however, erroneously employed; and it is Shelley's own logic which gives the ode its structural unity. The "Epipsychidion" is indebted in many ways to the Pindarick: it owes to this its varying stanzas, its use of exclamation and address, and its emphasis on changing though interrelated themes.⁵²

⁴⁹ Chalmers, Vol V

⁵⁰ Something like this would have resulted from a choice of the six-line stanza:

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire,
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing dost aspire,
And aspiring singest

⁵¹ The poem opens, for example, with "Epode I a"—a strange eccentricity in one who knew as much Greek as Shelley did. The strophes, antistrophes, and epodes do not conform. Shelley encrusts each stanza with exclamation

⁵² The poem is associable with the Pindarick tradition in still another sense. "It is," Shelley explains, "an idealized history of my life and feelings."

Nevertheless the romantic beauty of the poem is in large part due to the evenness of the pentameter measure, and to the extraordinary grace of the couplet rhymes. "Adonais" has kinship not only with Milton and Coleridge, but with the laments of classical antiquity. Shelley terms it an "elegy"; but it is not that in the established English sense, primarily because of its dependence on the Spenserian stanza.⁵³ Ought we not rather to call it a "monody"?

Shelley's odes in regular patterns suggest many other questions. The long stanza of the "Ode to Liberty" is suited to the theme and to the use of musical words.⁵⁴ Any less roomy and florid a scheme would not have permitted such lines as these to be.

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves.

Nevertheless, the capaciousness of the stanza is to some extent responsible for the fact that this ode is little more than a rhetorical dithyramb, which suggests the word "inane" in its least complimentary sense. The "Ode to Heaven" is a kind of Pindaric,⁵⁵ with choruses providing the three parts. Of metrical interest is the constant inversion of the first foot, a device that helps to convey the visionary realization of natural magic to which the poem is devoted. Shelley's use of the choral ode in *Prometheus Unbound*⁵⁶ and *Hellas*⁵⁷ may be

⁵³ The Spenserian stanza is ably used, but the reader will sense the indebtedness to Wordsworth.

⁵⁴ The poem allows variations from the initial stanzaic pattern, and so is properly a Pindarick.

⁵⁵ Sufficient stress is placed on the iambic rhythm to prevent the ode from falling mistakenly into the trochaic cadence.

⁵⁶ See *Poetical Works*, II, 106 ("Chorus"). The feminine rhymes convey an impression of melodic thinness. Cf. Coleridge's masterly handling in "Kubla Khan."

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 336 ("Grand Chorus"). Note the resemblance between this stanza and the six-line stanza of hymnody.

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,
The earth doth like a snake renew
Her winter weeds outworn.

referred to also, ~~if only to stress the point that as he achieved density of expression his meaning became clearer.~~

The work of so brilliant a poet had necessarily to affect later conceptions of the ode. Just as Shelley himself ignored or did not understand the humanistic traditions which underlie the form, so readers for whom he represented the best standards of lyric art often forgot that his definitions of the ode were quite individualistic and without historical precedent. Yet it is a striking fact that those definitions have not prevailed, despite innumerable efforts in their behalf. The reason is partly that imitation of such forms as the "Ode to the West Wind" would have to be obvious imitation, whereas the essence of Romantic modernity is originality. It is even more important that Shelley's practice tended to erase the differences between "ode" and "lyric."⁵⁸ As soon as the mold was broken and the poet free to create whatever patterns he wished, the nice distinctions between *genre* and *genre* would serve no further purpose. It is of course true that an element of address was still included in Shelley's ode formula. Few modern poets make so lavish a use of that element as he did.⁵⁸

Matters are quite different in the case of Keats, ~~who subordinated individualism to the objective demands of high art.~~ His ~~best~~ work, however recklessly imitated and misinterpreted, is manifestly outliving that of his contemporaries—a fact all the more remarkable when one considers the environment out of which the poet arose and in which most of his

Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream

⁵⁸ A word may be added concerning the mastery of syllabic rhythm to which nearly all of Shelley's verse testifies, lest what has been said might seem in any way to ignore this. Saintsbury (*English Prosody*, III, 116) says of Shelley "He is one of the greatest of all practical prosodists—and one of the least deliberate." This is true as long as one thinks of syllabic rhythm; it ceases to be correct when attention is fixed on the stanza. Here the absence of "deliberation" may prove almost fatal. Any number of lines can be quoted from Shelley with aesthetic satisfaction, but there are few stanzas which are entirely above criticism. This is doubtless one reason why he so seldom triumphed in the sonnet or the epigrammatical poem.

creative years were spent. His coterie of friends were stimulating, no doubt, unhampered by any feeling of caste, and interested in experiment. But there was little about their work to match the intense artistic training to which Keats subjected himself. He was a stern, almost forbidding critic of others; but he was also able to scrutinize himself and his work relentlessly.⁵⁹ The result, in so far as the present enquiry is concerned, was a mastery of finely wrought ode forms to which the critic must attach great significance.

✓ Keats's early work reveals his discipleship to humanistic models. Colvin said of it that it was "quite imitative and conventional," and mentioned an "ode to Hope, quite in the square-toed manner of eighteenth-century didactic verse."⁶⁰ This remark is in the vein of Lord Houghton's comment on Peacock's early poems, which he attributed to a time "when verse-writing was a gentleman-like recreation as well as a divine afflatus, and when a critic no more thought of dissecting a pleasant piece of rhyme than a man of science would object to the deficient mechanisms of the toys of childhood."⁶¹ Yet it was surely only because of personal experience of the limitations of vogueish models that the great Romantic poets were induced to discover, through the seventeenth century, a pathway toward their own art. We occasionally forget that the educational formation to which the English boy was subjected had changed relatively little during the eighteenth century, despite all the intellectual and political upheaval which came at the close. Hannah More, writing to a six-year-old Thomas Babington Macaulay, said, for example: "Though you are a little boy now . . . I think you have hit off the Ode very well, and I am much obliged to you for the dedication."⁶² Horace was still ubiquitous. And

⁵⁹ *John Keats*, by Amy Lowell (Boston, 1925), Vol. I, especially pp. 440-505

⁶⁰ *John Keats*, by Sidney Colvin (New York, 1917), p. 223

⁶¹ Quoted in *Thomas Love Peacock*, by J. B. Priestley (New York, 1927), p. 112.

⁶² See *Early One Morning*, by Walter de la Mare (New York, 1935), p. 44

when Mark Pattison⁶³ went to Oxford, he read Pindar's Olympic Odes; but the Greek appears to have been beyond the construing of most Oriel men. The surprising thing, therefore, is not the continuity of prosodic habits, but the triumph of some poets over that continuity.

The ode held an honored place even in the rebellious households of the Romantic time. John Hamilton Reynolds published an *Ode* in 1814;⁶⁴ and Leigh Hunt honored April of the same year with an "Ode for the Spring of 1814."⁶⁵ This last was couched in stanzas of eleven irregular lines, and some interest attaches to the curious weak rhymes:

Nor did the Shape give way
To mightier spirits like him,
Nor did upon that final day
Elder Corruption strike him

Several of Hunt's odes are, one may add in this place, striking examples of how to conjoin and how not to conjoin lines of unequal length.⁶⁶ His contemporaries included not a few men who penned odes in the familiar academic style. Thus Henry Taylor wrote "Heroism in the Shade,"⁶⁷ in honor of the return of Sir H. Pottinger from China. "I being minded that, at all events, he should not remain unsung," Taylor remarks, "delivered myself of the ode which follows." Even

⁶³ *Memoirs* (London, 1885), p. 127

⁶⁴ Lowell, *op cit*, I, 197-98 "Reynolds possessed a precocious talent which, like the majority of such talents, withered in the promise. In 1814, when he was only eighteen, he had published a pamphlet entitled *An Ode*. He was, besides, joint author with his brother-in-law, Thomas Hood, of a little anonymous book, *Odes and Addresses to Great People*"

⁶⁵ *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, edited by H. S. Milford (Oxford, n. d.), p. 201

⁶⁶ Hunt's other odes include "Ode to the Sun," in a stanza of nine irregular lines, and a burlesque "Coronation Soliloquy," written "to the tune of

"Amo, ama,
I love a lass"

Edmund Blunden's comment (*Poetive Tablets*, p. 213), "He conversed, and sometimes too deliberately, in his poetry," applies also to Hunt's odes

⁶⁷ *The Autobiography of Henry Taylor* (New York, 1885), p. 249 The ode has good passages, in the old conventional manner.

the ladies held the term in high, if horrendous, regard. Miss Mitford quotes a stanza from Praed's "The Belle of the Ball":

She kept an album, too, at home,
Well filled with all an album's glories. . . .
Soft songs to Julia's cockatoo;
Fierce odes to famine and to slaughter.⁶⁸

The allusion to Coleridge in Praed's final line reminds one that a great deal of the interest in ode writing which flourished in Hunt's and similar circles is in all probability due to the author of "Dejection." He is very particularly the link between the past and future in the case of Keats.

The early odes of Keats parallel rather than imitate Coleridge's essays in the same form. In 1815 he was writing an "Ode to Apollo"⁶⁹ which echoes Milton though the diction is more reminiscent of the age of Pope. The following lines seem to come straight out of the Cecilian ode tradition:

'Tis awful silence then again;
Expectant stand the spheres;
Breathless the laurell'd peers,
Nor move, till ends the lofty strain,
Nor move till Milton's tuneful thunders cease,
And leave once more the ravish'd heavens in peace.

Next came two beautiful odes inserted into *Endymion*⁷⁰—"Ode to Pan," and the "Ode to Sorrow." The first, composed in long and languorous lines, is a foretaste of later masterpieces; the second harks back to the Elizabethans in cadences that nothing else in Keats's work quite resembles. Then, dur

⁶⁸ Mary Russell Mitford, *Recollections of a Literary Life*, p. 108

⁶⁹ For the text of this and other odes, see *Poetical Works of John Keats*, edited by H. Buxton-Forman (London, 1907). The "Ode to Apollo" has one five-line stanza. The rhyme-scheme is *ababcc*, there are inversions. The "Hymn to Apollo" is still more like a normal eighteenth-century ode, with an artificial irregular stanza. Colvin (*op. cit.*, p. 223) says that this "ode" "owes everything to Gray."

⁷⁰ See Colvin, *op. cit.*, p. 411. "and odes also, to all intents and purposes are the two great lyrics in *Endymion*."

ing January of 1818, a glimpse of a lock of Milton's hair suggested the poem which, sent with a letter to Bailey,⁷¹ is one of the most interesting of Keats's metrical exercises. Each of the four stanzas is a separate prosodic entity, though three conform in being ten lines long. But as the poem progresses the number of pentameter lines increases, the first stanza having two such lines and the fourth seven. Not many lyrics so clearly reveal a great writer in the act of casting about for the form that would best serve his use. It marks a point halfway between the "Ode to Apollo" and the magnificent odes of 1819.⁷²

While these six odes in so many ways clearly duplicate the experience of Collins (as has been shown), there is little indication that Keats had gone to school to his precursor. It was apparently Wordsworth who had at this time won his admiration and suggested new goals.⁷³ At any rate, the six odes are all products of the realization, gained from Wordsworth, that experience of man and of nature can be fused imaginatively in the manner of Greek myth. To Keats the genius of Attica was harmony, composure, superimposed by aesthetic, quasi-mystical fiat upon verities that would otherwise remain glaringly, agonizingly disparate—youth's dream of life and beauty, and the shock of death; the running away of time, and human zest for immortality; the bliss of mature fruitfulness, and the barren sterility of age. This insight into the order-giving function of tragic intuition was accompanied in Keats's case by a deep satisfaction in stately and measured utterance. This he shared with his time, but especially with Wordsworth. It is worth noting that for both the sonnet (which as they used it only outwardly resembled the Eliza-

⁷¹ *The Letters of John Keats*, edited by H. Buxton-Forman (London, 1907), p. 286. The date of the letter is Jan. 23, 1818. The pattern of the opening stanza is 3333332552.

⁷² Compare Keats' laud of Milton with that of Collins. There can be little doubt that the tendency in both poets toward the pentameter rhythm was encouraged by their reading of Milton.

⁷³ Lowell, *op. cit.*, I, 492, 542-44, and *passim*.

bethan or even the Miltonic sonnet) had an especial fascination, mysterious and possibly inexplicable, but certainly based in part upon the character of the pentameter line and upon the balance of outer and inner themes which Petrarch's form makes possible. Thus the six odes of 1819 were preceded by the "Fragment of an Ode to Maia," which is a beautiful sonnet in the act of changing into pure lyric.⁷⁴

Finney⁷⁵ has shown that five of the great odes were written during April and May, while one—"To Autumn"—followed in September. "To Psyche" was the first of the five; "On Indolence" the last. Now if one observes the prosodic development with any care, three things become apparent: first, that though "To Psyche" admits minor irregularities into the pattern, the later odes are absolutely regular; second, that the shorter lines disappear completely; and third, that the rhyme schemes tend to become more suggestive of the sonnet. Of interest also is the addition of the eleventh line in "To Autumn" (the other regular odes, "Indolence," "Melancholy," "Grecian Urn" have ten), which seems to have some of the effect of the Spenserian Alexandrine.

So much has been written about these odes,⁷⁶ and so much space would be needed to add anything* either adequate or new, that one must be content with stressing what is essential from the point of view of the present inquiry. If the "Ode to a Nightingale" be taken as an example, it will be found a compendium of the influences which had helped to shape the

⁷⁴ There are fourteen lines, dividing naturally into an octave and a sestet. The rhyme-scheme is that of Spenser's "Epithalamion."

⁷⁵ *The Evolution of Keats's Poetry*, by Claude Lee Finney (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), II, pp. 572 ff. In a long letter to George and Georgiana Keats (February 14-May 3, 1819), Keats enclosed a version of the "Ode to Psyche." See *Letters*, pp. 123 ff. Colvin (*op cit*, p. 411) holds that the poem was written during April of that year.

⁷⁶ Robert Bridges, in *Collected Essays, Papers, etc.*, IV (London, 1929), 128-46, ranks these odes as follows: "Autumn" (first because "no sort of fault can be found in it"); "Nightingale"; "Melancholy"; "Psyche"; "Grecian Urn"; "Indolence." He adds that "the two early odes to Apollo and the Ode to a Lock of Milton's Hair are, as are the two later odes to Fanny, chiefly or entirely of personal interest."

English ode. This is first of all highly literate verse, the allusions (many of which are listed by Finney)⁷⁷ carrying one's mind back over a great deal of poetic history. It must suffice here to note that, as Edmund Blunden⁷⁸ has observed, the opening lines are in all probability a paraphrase of Horace's Nineteenth Epode. Again, one might point out the persistence, despite the heightened beauty of the handling, of age-old epithet:

. . . the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.

Here, it may be said in passing, the effect of the long vowels is to divert one's attention from the massed sibilants hidden in the lines. Moreover, there is the special Romantic circumstance that the stanza, though derived from older models, suggests above all Keats's work in the sonnet form. If the one short line is omitted, the stanza is a sonnet minus four lines of the octave. The rhyme scheme, *ababcdecde*, is of course not out of keeping with Keats's sonnet practice,⁷⁹ and helps greatly to render the heavy stanza manageable. And finally the poem as a whole is a kind of elongated sonnet, the material confronted being put first and the personal reaction second. This transfer to the ode of characteristics associated with another poetic form is not new,⁸⁰ but the fusion here is so perfect that it may easily pass unnoticed.

When this and the other odes are read in sequence and the question is asked as to what Keats's place in the history of the form may be, the historian must inevitably turn to

⁷⁷ Note, e.g., his interesting discussion of the nightingale as the medieval bird of love, pp. 614 ff

⁷⁸ In "Keats and His Predecessors," *London Mercury*, XX (July, 1929), 270 ff Blunden says that the evidence "seems to warrant us almost in discerning, through over a hundred years, that Keats had his Horace in his hand when he sat under the plum tree at Lawn Bank, and presently began to write"

⁷⁹ This practice varies.

⁸⁰ The ode form has been, as we have seen, associated at various times with the *cannone*, the hymn, the ballad, and the operatic verse styles.

Collins as a basis for comparison.⁸¹ For the great odes of 1819 are more perfect applications of the norm established by the "Popular Superstitions" ode. Keats shortened the seventeen-line stanza. But above all he carried the liberation of the form from expressionism, whether artificial or spontaneous, a full step farther. Like Collins he was not concerned primarily with the statement of an idea or the utterance of emotion but with the creation of an image which, fringed with kindred lesser images, would then suggest the poet's mood and thought. Because this act of creation dictated the process of utterance on the one hand and was on the other hand modified by the pictorial feeling of the time, it is interesting to see a few of the changes which took place in English verse during the sixty odd years that followed the publication of Collins' book. These lines are from the "Popular Superstitions" ode:

All hail, ye scenes that o'er my soul prevail!
Ye splendid friths and lakes, which, far away,
Are by smooth Annan fill'd or pastoral Tay,
Or Don's romantic springs at distance hail!
The time shall come, when I, perhaps, may tread
Your lowly glens, o'erhung with spreading broom;
Or, o'er your stretching heaths, by Fancy led;
Or, o'er your mountains creep, in awful gloom!
Then will I dress once more the faded bower,
Where Jonson sat in Drummond's classic shade,
Or crop, from Tivotdale, each lyric flower,
And mourn on Yarrow's banks, where Willy's laid!

Compare the opening stanza of Wordsworth's⁸¹ "Resolution and Independence":

There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily and fell in floods,
But now the sun is rising calm and bright,

⁸¹ A study of Wordsworth's pictorial utterance would be interesting. An attempt is being made (in an as yet unpublished essay by Mary Wyman) to show some affinity with the Chinese poets

The birds are singing in the distant woods;
 Over his own sweet voice the stock-dove broods,
 The jay makes answer as the magpie chatters;
 And all the air is filled with pleasant noise of waters.

And this is a stanza of Keats's "On Melancholy":

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
 Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
 That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
 And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
 Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
 Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
 Or on the wealth of globed peonies;
 Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
 Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
 And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

It is obvious that Collins, generally concerned with literary themes, is farther from his scene than the two other poets are from theirs. His way of identifying himself with nature is by seeing himself in the role of the poets it suggests. The parallels are overt; the composition is skillful and still classical, in the sense that it relies primarily upon a process of adding up the component parts. Wordsworth's stanza, however, is a sequence of images that builds up the impression of joy which the poet receives direct from nature. It is all action—rising, and singing, and the "pleasant noise" of waters. The parallelism is cumulative, but the impact of the stanza comes from the mood of the poet whose soul is attuned to the rhythm of the universe. Keats's picture is not only the most exquisitely wrought of the three, but also the most perfectly fused. He is not the poet who receives the largesse of nature, but the poet who transforms this largesse into his own myth. Nevertheless, the parallelism is closer to that of Collins than to that of Wordsworth. The difference is merely that Collins identifies himself with other things, while Keats identifies other things with himself. That is why each separate image, outlined with epithets impeccably chosen, blends so admirably

with the movement of the stanza as a whole. Naturally there may be some doubt as to whether an ode ought to do these things—whether the form handed down by Pindar and Horace, and then perfected in English during the Renaissance, is not properly a form designed for other uses. But there is no denying a perennial drift towards pictorial expression in English verse. ✓

Inevitably the odes of Keats were imitated more widely than any other poems of their time. Quite as unavoidable was the discovery that his stanzas could not be put to the varied uses which the word "ode" suggests. The periodicals of the nineteenth century are, therefore, rich in very bad pseudo-Keatsian odes. But there are beautiful echoes, and interestingly enough they are often to be heard in poems not designed as odes. Witness, for example, Robert Bridges' exquisite "Elegy on a Lady."⁸² Possibly one may infer that although Keats triumphed in the form he chose, and did so legitimately as the heritor of a great tradition, his stanza is not so much an innovation brought to a new degree of perfection as a quite individual variation; and that what he gave the modern ode was, rather, a fresh awareness of the potential beauty and richness of diction.

To what extent was Romantic interest in diction associated with a knowledge of or delight in music? The query has some bearing on the history of the ode during this period. Coleridge said of himself: "I have no ear whatsoever; I could not sing an air to save my life; but I have the intensest delight in music, and can detect good from bad."⁸³ In Leigh Hunt's circle, music was much appreciated, and Vincent Novello, one of the first editors of older English music, was a frequent guest.⁸⁴ Byron, on intimate terms with Moore, was often tempted into melodic bypaths. Thus the "Hebrew Melodies"

⁸² *The Poetical Works of Robert Bridges* (London, 1936).

⁸³ *Specimens of the Table-Talk*, p. 186.

⁸⁴ "L'Inspiration musicale de Shelley," by André Coeruy, *Le Correspondant*, Vol. CCLXXXVIII, No. 1435, p. 136.

were planned for musical settings derived from Israelitic chant by a friend of the poet.⁸⁵ Shelley played indifferently well. Yet on the whole the likelihood of a lyric which was not a folk song being set to music was not great. Miss Mitford wrote: "In general musical people say that Sir Walter Scott's songs are ill suited to music, difficult to set, difficult to sing. One can not help suspecting that the fault rests with the music, that can not blend itself with such poetry."⁸⁶ The justice of this remark can be discerned if one reflects that Schubert was then immortalizing even very mediocre German poems.

In Shelley's case the especial Romantic attitude towards music was clearly illustrated. He delighted in simple instruments such as the guitar, which restrict an artist to melodies free of involved harmonic variations. The voices of women, too, were endowed with a peculiar, quasi-mystical charm.⁸⁷ One may compare the attitude of a typical American Romantic minor poet, James Gates Percival, who is described as taking an intense delight in music which ran the gamut of a few notes.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, the composers often professed to be baffled by Shelley's lyrics. "I once asked an eminent musician, the late Madame Goldschmidt, why Shelley's lyrics were ill-adapted to music," wrote J. A. Symonds, ". . . she pointed out how the verbal melody was intended to be self-sufficing in these lyrics, how full of complicated thoughts and changeful images the verse is, how packed with consonants the words are, how the tone of the emotion alters, and how no one melodic phrase could be found to fit the daedal woof of the emotion."⁸⁹ In short, Madame Goldschmidt was obviously a partisan advocate of reigning Italian conceptions of musical

⁸⁵ Byron, *Works*, III, 381-406, and II, 15

⁸⁶ *Op cit*, p. 427. She adds "Where in our language shall we find more delicious melody than in 'County Guy'?"

⁸⁷ Coeruy, *op cit*, pp 135-36

⁸⁸ *The Life and Letters of James Gates Percival*, by Julius H Ward (Boston, 1866), p 432 He is described as "playing melodies without chords, with intense delight . . . to himself, at any rate."

⁸⁹ *Essays Speculative and Suggestive* (London, 1890), pp. 251-52. Madame Goldschmidt had read the "Song of Pan" and "To the Night" aloud

form. Nevertheless, it would be difficult to list all the settings which have been written for various Shelley lyrics.⁹⁰ At least five composers have done their best for "My Soul Is an Enchanted Boat," and even longer poems have not infrequently been set to music.

Though earnest efforts were made during this period to write elaborate accompaniments for formal odes,⁹¹ we may reasonably conclude that the Romantic age found it virtually impossible to conjoin verse and florid music.⁹² On the other hand, verse itself did indubitably become more musical. The Johnsonian rules were violated on nearly every page of good Romantic poetry; and though the grammarians continued by and large to swear by those rules,⁹³ even the critics were

⁹⁰ The catalogue of the New York Public Library lists more than a dozen fairly elaborate settings.

⁹¹ The list of formal odes written to accompany musical settings is fairly extensive. Grove mentions Sterndale Bennett's setting for Tennyson's "Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition" (1862). John Keble wrote an "Ode for the Encaenia at Oxford, Written for the Installation of his Grace Arthur, Duke of Wellington," the music of which I have not been able to find. Other titles include *The Jubilee Ode, performed in the Rotunda . . . on the Occasion of George Third Entering into the 50th Year of His Reign* (Dublin, 1810), R M 13 f 16 (5), *Ode for the Year 1818 To the words of Southey, and dedicated to George Prince Regent Consisting of vocal numbers, recitative airs, etc* (R M 23 g 14), *The Inauguration Ode, for the Opening of the National Exhibition at Cork, 1852, The Duke of Wellington Ode, with a Prologue of the Queen's Reign, and a New Anthem*, the music of which is by Paulin Huggett Pearce (London, 1854), *Ode in Praise of Handel*, composed by Johann F. Reichardt (R M 23 o 19), and an *Ode for Music*, dedicated to Prince Albert, Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, by R M Essington (the Brit Mus MS contains the words only).

⁹² Even song writing degenerated, reaching a low ebb during the Victorian Age. "The chronicle of Victorian music is of necessity somewhat dull. Yet it was a period of steady and careful preparation for greater things to come. It produced nothing exciting, nothing even outstanding, but it was the necessary development of a musical environment that in the later years of the Queen's reign was to bring forth the re-birth of English music." Edward J. Dent, "Early Victorian Music," in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865* (London, 1934), p. 264. Barry Cornwall was the most representative song writer (*English Songs and Other Small Poems*, Boston, 1851), but his composer was, typically enough, the "Chevalier Neukomm." Public interest in concerts by visiting foreign artists steadily increased. Cf. *The History of the Times* (New York, 1939), II, 218-19.

⁹³ The prosodists echoed the general dissatisfaction. See a popular handbook of the time—*Rules for Making English Verse*, by Tom Hood (London, 1877), p. 61. "Any rubbish will do for music" is the maxim of the music shopkeeper,

awakening to the fact that such theories as Latham's⁹⁴ were untenable. One major reason for this change was that aversion to the clichés of the eighteenth century had led to increased regard for Milton and the older poets generally. Perhaps there was also a greater amount of conscious study of prosody than the comments of creative writers would indicate. Yet, at least in so far as the ode is concerned, many signs point to the decisive influence of emotionalism upon verse. Just as the Augustan intellect could exact, on the one hand, a couplet epigrammatical in form and import alike and, on the other hand, an "untrammelled" procession of lines in the Pindarick stanza, so also the Romantic emphasis on feeling suggested cadences which might be either naturally expressionistic or artificial in the sense that they were normal in older humanistic practice.⁹⁵

The "naturally expressionistic" cadences had a great effect upon the relations between verse and music. Thus no system of prosody but only a creative awareness of a rhythm emotionally induced could have aided Shelley in writing,

Hail to thee, blithe spirit!

This is true although the metrical elements of the poem are derived from older usage. And so there is manifest here a close parallel between the pure music of sound and the music of language. This parallel is, however, not identification. The Romantic poets were never indifferent to meaning, as some of the heirs of Mallarmé have been. Indeed, they may be criticized not unfairly for having attributed too much importance

who is practically the art nowadays, and who has the interests, he is supposed to represent, so little at heart that he will not scruple to publish songs, consisting of 'nonsense verses'—as schoolboys call them—set to music, if he thought that the usual artifice of paying singers a royalty on the sale for singing a song would prevail on the public to buy them"

⁹⁴ "Prosody," in *The English Language*, by Robert G. Latham (London, 1862).

⁹⁵ Thus a love of archaic utterance eventually went hand in hand with the presentation of themes having little more than emotional significance, as witness (e.g.) Ernest Dowson. See his *Complete Poems* (New York, 1928).

to what they wished to say. It is only that their attentiveness to the value of sound in the expression of feeling was more like that of a musician than like that of an Augustan poet.⁹⁶ And because the ode was a favorite medium for the utterance of Romantic emotion, it is of the greatest interest to the student of what underlies specifically modern theories of prosody. If only four poems had survived from the earlier years of the nineteenth century—Coleridge's "Kubla Khan," Wordsworth's "Immortality Ode," Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind," and Keats's "To Autumn"—the systematic study of English verse as a complex illustration of the laws of sound, which study lists Bryant, Poe, and Lanier⁹⁷ among its pioneer fosterers, would have been inevitable. ✓

⁹⁶ For a later appreciation of the issues involved, see *The Road to Xanadu*, by John Livingston Lowes (Boston, 1927), and *The Sense of Glory*, by Herbert Read (New York, 1928).

⁹⁷ See especially Lanier's *The Science of English Verse* (New York, 1890) and *Music and Poetry* (New York, 1898). Pages 80-90 of the second work discuss the art of writing verse suited to modern orchestral accompaniment. For an evaluation of Lanier's contentions, see "Literary Themes and Program Music," by Abner Wellington Kelley, *PMLA*, LII (June, 1937).

CHAPTER TEN: *Conclusion*

THE DECISION to close this inquiry with Keats was no arbitrary one. His odes are the final fruits of a poetic endeavor which, inaugurated by humanists eager to reproduce the patterns of classical antiquity, was bound to change radically as soon as the concept of imitation gave way completely to the ideal of individualistic expression. And give way it did as a consequence of the Romantic achievement, however little aware the Romantics themselves may have been of the full import of their program. During at least two generations after Keats, the word "ode" was a poorly understood and often misapplied term. It was now the word "lyric" which appeared everywhere, indicating that the schemata of centuries had ceased to possess any objective validity and that what mattered was solely the creative impulse which guided the poet in the selection of a form suited to a given idea or mood. Much can be said in support of this point of view. But though the liberation from fealty to models afforded greater scope for dictional subtlety as well as for philosophic speculation (or what was believed to be that), it meant losing sight of what had been the brightest glory of the humanistic tradition—perfect artistry within narrow limits. Just as the dramatic unities are prerequisites for one kind of theatrical triumph, so also are the static lyric forms, consonant with an assumed or real musical accompaniment, indispensable to the poet who would achieve a certain kind of success. Sooner or later this was bound to be discovered, and the act of discovery would inevitably mean a revival of ode writing.

Accordingly a rapid and condensed survey of post-Keatsian

ode history may be of some value in indicating the conclusions which the modern time has derived in practice from the poetic past. It will be undertaken here not for the purpose of characterizing each writer's achievement, but solely in the hope of making clear what the trends were, whence they arose, and to what goals they led. Perhaps one should add at the outset that although this chapter may appear to be concerned with the aftermath of Romantic effort, it is written in complete awareness of the fact that the foundations of a new and different age were being laid.

✓ During the Victorian time, which extends roughly speaking from the death of Keats to the death of Tennyson, three kinds of ode writing were practiced. ~~The first was either academic or popular, being characterized by those conventions with which the word had been associated during the eighteenth century.~~ An ode was a poem written to commemorate some striking event,¹ to grace collegiate exercises,² or to

¹ See, for example, the newspaper, periodical, and annual verse of the period. A competition for the best ode in honor of Robert Burns was won by Isa Craig, known later as Isa Knox, who triumphed over 619 competitors. She did not attend the ceremony at the Crystal Palace during which her composition was solemnly read. See "The Women Poets of the Seventies," by V. Sackville-West, in *The Eighteen-Seventies*, edited by H. Granville-Barker (New York, 1929), pp. 126-27.

² *The Influence of Horace on the Chief Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, by Mary Rebecca Thayer (New Haven, 1916), *passim*. Versions of the odes continued to appear, among the final offerings of the century being *Odes and Epodes of Horace*, translated by S. E. De Vere (London, 1893). But the age was more distinguished, perhaps for the beauty of its references to the Greek poets. See, for example, the exquisite allusion to Homeric epithet in this stanza from William Stanley Roscoe's "To Spring on the Banks of the Cam" (*The Oxford Book of Victorian Verse*, edited by A. Quiller-Couch, p. 11).

O Thou that from the green vales of the West
Com'st in thy tender robes with bashful feet,
And to the gathering clouds
Lifest thy soft blue eye.

The classical heritage of the American college was sacrosanct. The "Hero" in Lowell's "Fable for Critics" in *The Poetical Works of James Russell Lowell* (Boston, n. d.), p. 122,

Appeared in a gown, and a vest of black satin,
To spout such a Gothic oration in Latin
That Tully could never have made out a word in it.

voice the sentiments of those whose notions of verse were formed by anthologies.³ The second kind was based on Romantic example, primarily the Keatsian ode, and is best illustrated from the work of Tennyson and Arnold. There are several other noteworthy examples, but none of them adds anything of essential importance to the materials amassed by the student of Romantic forms. The third kind is wholly or in part un-Romantic, being based either upon conscious search for the poetic virtues of classical antiquity or upon the older English poets. It flourished during the later decades of the Queen's reign but was never without its devotees.

Concerning the academic and popular ode nothing further need be said, except that it was ubiquitous. Proceeding then to Tennyson, one must note first of all that he did not lack familiarity with classical models. At school he had been drilled thoroughly in "the old Eton Latin Grammar";⁴ and at Cambridge he wrote Greek and Latin odes.⁵ But when he began to write English verse his guides were the great Romantics, especially Keats; and it was only very gradually that he felt his way back to the metrical exemplars of antiquity. Similarly, he appears to have been little moved as a youth by the older English poets; but when he died the book on which his thought was fixed was *Cymbeline*. Tennyson is both the

Commencements were embellished with odes. The youthful poet could find models of divers sorts in such manuals as Henry Cassell Davis' *Commencement Parts*, etc (New York, 1898). The "Ode" by Arthur Irving in *Baccalaureate Sermon and Oration and Poem Class of 1869* (Boston, 1869) consisted of two thin stanzas of eight anapestic lines. Church schools kept up the ode tradition until well after the opening of the century, as witness the files of the *Notre Dame Scholastic*.

³ For example, the mid-century anthology, *The Rural Poetry of the English Language* (London, n. d.) This volume seems to use the word "ode" as designating a lyric poem neither purely descriptive nor pronouncedly religious. Examples are Bryant's "March," Warton's "April," Hood's "Autumn," and Dawes's "Spirit of Beauty." Included is "Winter: A Pindaric Ode," of which the editor says ". . . by W. Jenks, D.D., written in 1789 when the author was 17."

⁴ *Alfred, Lord Tennyson: a Memoir by His Son*, by Hallam Tennyson (New

heir of Romantic attitudes in prosody and the originator of a new trend back to classicism. In quite the same way, the intellectual drift of his poetry was towards conservatism, although the underlying structure of his thought was indubitably Romantic. ✓

The early "Ode to Memory" ⁶ was in the straight line of descent from Collins and Keats, though passages may also suggest Shelley. Next came the "Choric Song" in "The Lotus Eaters"—a great advance over the poet's earlier work and clearly an ode even if Tennyson did not call it one. Inspiration and mood are Romantic. There are some banal phrases, but the beauty of form and diction is sustained. The stanzaic pattern is based not on metrical choice or bent of thought but on emotional expressionism. No doubt the initial eleven-line stanza might consort with a Keatsian ode, and the Miltonic ancestry is evident in the lines, which have from three to six stresses. The final stanza, added in the revision of 1842, swings into a solemn measure of long trochaic lines and is a link between older sententious verse and the later expressionism that would emerge in such poems as G. K. Chesterton's "Lepanto." And the following stanza (the fourth) cannot easily be matched as a successful blend of Shelley and Keats:

Hateful is the dark blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark blue sea.
Death is the end of life, ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become

⁶ *The Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson* (Riverside edition, Boston, n. d.), I, 41. All other references to Tennyson's poems are to this edition. The "Ode to Memory" is Pindarick, with five stanzas of which the last is the most interesting. Specimen epithets are. "sweet showers", "storied walls", "bushless pike", "heaped hills", "frequent bridge", "trenched waters", "crowned lilies"; "dewy dawn." For comment, see *Alfred Tennyson: a Study of His Life and Work*, by Arthur Waugh (New York, 1892), where the resemblance to Shelley is discussed.

Portions and parcels of the dreadful past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
 To war with evil? Is there any peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
 All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
 In silence, ripen, fall, and cease,
 Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.✓

The theme of this stanza is also that of "The Vision of Sin," which I consider (with Saintsbury)⁷ an ode and the noblest of Tennyson's "choral" lyrics. Once again emotional expressionism, coupled now with conscious artistic design, for this poem is in the great volume of 1842, determined the form in which the verse was to be cast. The magnificent second stanza, which probably descends from the *Samson Agonistes* choruses and has in turn begotten despair and admiration in many a modern poet's breast, is a good example of how metrical dissonance, when expertly used, can express changes in mood. For dissonance it is, though Tennyson's observance of prosodic regulations is impeccable: the stanza cannot be scanned as either iambic or trochaic in rhythm. Equally noteworthy is the return to even and compact iambic pentameter after an interlude of trochaic quatrains which only the mordant irony they convey keeps from the peril of becoming secular hymnody after the fashion of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life." One might, no doubt, contend that this is a bastard ode, which violates such canons of the *genre* as may presumably exist; and certainly it is very remote from kinship with Grecian or Horatian models. Nevertheless it is clear that just as Cowley's formal irregularity (concerned primarily with varying length of line within the stanza) was legitimately born of the rhetorical intellect seeking release, so this new Tennysonian variability was a child of emotion eager for untrammelled dress.⁸

⁷ *English Prosody*, III, 117

⁸ A word may be added concerning Tennyson's indebtedness to the Pindaric form, in which such poems as "The Mermaid" and "Margaret" were composed,

Tennyson also gave the formal ode a refurbished dignity which was not without its effect upon many later poets. The "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" was written at Twickenham⁹ in the spirit of the great English poetic eulogies. Most of the critics were hostile,¹⁰ and their attitude was to some extent justified by the manifest imperfections of the verse. Obviously Tennyson found it difficult to turn aside quickly from the aesthetic interests which had to so great an extent determined the character of his work. Later revisions were considerable and effective. But most of the early criticism was, no doubt, inspired by awareness of the low estate into which poetry of the sort had then fallen. For this is surely one of the nobler English rhetorical odes. It clings to the refrain, which was so important a part of Tennyson's prosodic repertory; to the device of address, which in his hands took on a note of almost hieratic injunction; and to internal rhymes, none too sparingly employed and often appearing to cover over a dearth of genuine poetic inspiration. By 1852, when the ode was written, Tennyson had lost his feeling for the nuances of the Pindarick form; and it was, therefore, quite natural that the three brief stanzas which introduce the poem should prove to be almost incomparably better than the long though relatively even stanzas which follow. The Wellington Ode was, of course, popular by reason of the author and his subject. It restored the vogue of the panegyrical ode in England and America,¹¹ and may be

though neither is an ode. Here is the same phenomenon noted in connection with Byron, Southey, and Shelley. The "Song of the Three Sisters," in "The Hesperides," is in Pindarick verse resembling that of "The Lotus-Eaters."

⁹ *Memoir*, p. 362

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 363. Henry Taylor was one of the few critics who praised the poem.

¹¹ The great American panegyrical ode is Lowell's "Commemoration Ode," read on July 21, 1865. Granted that it is uneven and wearily long, the best passages are very good, indeed. The sixth stanza, which begins,

Such was he, our Martyr-Chief,
Whom late the Nation he had led,
With ashes on her head,
Wept with the passion of an angry grief,

looked upon as the basic pattern of that ode in its modern forms.✓

The other rhetorical odes are interesting chiefly because they illustrate Tennyson's mature concern with classical models and with music as the accompaniment of verse. The "Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition" continues the tradition established by Dryden and Gray, with no important variations.¹² Tennyson was fond of reciting it "in a rolling voice."¹³ His understanding of music was not keen, though he was given to say that he "felt the glory"¹⁴ of orchestral melody. Instead he loved to read his verse in monotonous, booming cadences which had much of the effect of ancient chant. This fondness for stately rhythms accounts in part for his experiments in English adaptations of classical meters. The "Jubilee Ode" of 1887 was written, for the most part, in the meter of Catullus' *Collis O Heliconi*; the "Ode to Milton" was a venture in Alcaics; and the long swell of the "Ode to Vergil,"¹⁵ written for the "centenary" of the Mantuan bard, was doubtless suggested by the Roman hexameter.

Tennyson's reputation has suffered by reason of the fact that, being neither firebrand nor savant, he voiced no startling ideas. The only lesson he can teach is that of meticulous artistic workmanship. It may or may not be worth while. At

¹² as illustrious a hymn of praise as our verse affords These chaste, forthright, heartfelt sentences established a myth to which generations of Americans have turned almost unquestioningly, and though the sign under which they were born was rhetoric rather than metrical music, it is no meager praise to say that in them image, terse statement, and genial warmth of rhythm were combined

¹³ Technically regarded, the structure of the poem is interesting The sixth stanza in particular is notable for a well-handled recitative measure

¹⁴ *Memoir*, p. 480 The year was 1862

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 394. "Music seemed to him to be the language of spirits, and he would say 'I can feel the glory though I cannot follow the music. I know that I miss a good deal by not understanding it. It often seems to me that music must take up expression at the point where poetry leaves off, and express what cannot be expressed in words'"

¹⁶ The poem bears the subtitle "Written at the Request of the Mantuans for the Nineteenth Centenary of Vergil's Death."

any rate, the principal scholar-poets ¹⁶ of the era, Matthew Arnold and Arthur Clough, were nothing if not conveyors of messages. Both were steeped in the classical tradition, and yet both are unthinkable without the Romantic influence. Their fastidiousness was symptomatic of the anemia which sapped their powers even as it has largely undermined their reputations.

✓ Arnold called "Thyrsis" ¹⁷ a monody, and the stanza suggests Milton seen through the eyes of Keats. The studious avoidance of all but realistic material, however, assuredly does not. The ten-line iambic stanza, a variant of the *Scholar Gypsy* dizain, has one notable advantage for a poet so given to epigrammatical endings characterized by understatement: a three-stress line, coming after five lines, tends to break the stanza into two parts, so that something like the division between the octave and the sestet of a sonnet is achieved. This effect is heightened by the rhyme scheme. "Dover Beach" likewise suggests Milton, reminding the careful reader of the *Samson Agonistes* choruses. ¹⁸ It does so, however, only in so far as the form is concerned. All else is as remote from the moods of John Milton as woman is from man. There are echoes of the Nativity Hymn in "Westminster Abbey," which illustrates another variant of the ten-line stanza. ¹⁹ No one could doubt the lineage of such lines as these:

¹⁶ Notice should be taken of the close ties which bound poets to the universities during the Victorian Age. But other schools than Oxford and Cambridge begin to emerge, as witness Francis Thompson's career at the University of Manchester.

¹⁷ *The Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold* (London, 1929), p. 281. The classical allusions in stanzas 4, 9, 10, and 19 are made reticently. How much the poem owes to Keats may be seen from these lines, among others

Putting his sickle to the perilous grain
In the hot cornfield of the Phrygian king,
For thee the Lityerses-song again
Young Daphnis with his silver voice doth sing

¹⁸ There is a still closer resemblance to Milton in the irregular patterns of "Empedocles on Etna." See *Essays on Literature and Life*, by A. Clutton-Brock (New York, n. d.), pp. 127 ff.

¹⁹ Arnold was not always happy in his choice of rhymes—e.g., "mass" and "morass," "Guest" and "unrest." They accentuate the artificiality of this ode.

—Rough was the winter eve;
Their craft the fishers leave

It is a very fine elegiac ode, helped (one thinks) by the fact that the emphasis is shifted to the stanza beginnings, thus counteracting Arnold's tendency to end on the note of a sermon that might have been preached had sermons been in better taste. It is odd how thin and wraithlike the scenery evoked nevertheless is; and even the music of the elegy is more vibrant than are the figures which weave in and out of the metaphorical tapestry of the verse.

Clough is to be relished less as a poet, perhaps, than as a sensitive Christian spirit subdued and awed by the challenge of David Strauss. Two irregular religious poems—"Easter Day" and its sequel ²⁰—assure him of a modest place in the history of the ode, for this label is doubtless the proper one. They carry one's thought back through the Romantics to Watts rather than to Vaughan, but it may be that the resemblance is based solely upon a common classical training and the influence of the hymnody which sang itself into the ears of Clough and other young English divines. There is more kinship between his verse and that of Newman ²¹ than is usually admitted; and any number of minor figures, for example Reginald Heber, ²²—who translated odes by Pindar and Klopstock, and somehow acquired the art of hymn writing,—and Joseph Blanco White, ²³ illustrate the lasting appeal of liturgical song in its Protestant forms. The blocks of two- and three-stress lines which Clough sets against the solid phalanx of his pentameters thus have precedent in their favor, but that is about all. ²⁴

²⁰ *Poems*, by Arthur Hugh Clough (London, 1879)

²¹ See particularly the choruses in *The Dream of Gerontius* by John Henry Newman (London, n. d.)

²² *The Poetical Works of Reginald Heber* (New York, n. d.) contains a version of the First Olympic Ode and a "Translation of an Ode of Klopstock" Klopstock is, after Hoelderlin, the foremost of modern German ode writers

²³ One of the lesser figures in the Oxford Movement, and a poet of some promise

²⁴ See "To David in Heaven," in *Poems*, by Robert Buchanan (Boston, 1866),

It is a far cry from such matters to the dawning Celtic revival,²⁵ though one might urge that Aubrey De Vere was a friend of Newman. De Vere's *Irish Odes*²⁶ are, to be sure, the work of a minor poet who trod in Wordsworthian footprints, and there is little Celtic flavor in them other than their honest patriotic sentiment. Some of the odes are Pindarick; others are written in regular stanzas of no great distinction. The "Autumnal Ode,"²⁷ which struggles hard to keep from being straight pentameter, is probably the best of the Pindaricks. There are a few interesting stanzas. The real Irish music was echoed in the odes of James Clarence Mangan, whose "Dark Rosaleen" and "O'Hussey's Ode to the Maguire"²⁸ introduce a new and exotic note. Mangan's rhythms are beautiful but suffer from the usual limitations of quaintness. His stanzas are derived from the poetic material he was translating into English. Here at last the "primitive ode," so much coveted by the eighteenth century and eagerly attempted by Gray, really became a new literary form. But, as should have been evident from the beginning, such verse is sundered from humanistic tradition by so wide a gulf that its formlessness becomes antithetical to everything—including Cowley's Pindaricks—for which the term "ode" had stood.

Therewith we come to the third kind of ode writing. Of Walter Savage Landor, its first exponent, it may be said that

where the stanza interlards two seven-foot lines with four three-foot lines
The resultant rhythm is strangely jumpy.

²⁵ The Celtic revival goes back, of course, to the eighteenth century. See *The Celtic Revival in English Literature (1760-1800)*, by Edward D. Snyder, especially p. 179, for a commentary on the *Poems, Tales, Odes, Sonnets, etc.*, of Richard Lloyd (1804).

²⁶ *Irish Odes and Other Poems*, by Aubrey De Vere (New York, 1869). The specifically Irish odes include "The Music of the Future" and "Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin," the stanza in both cases being eight lines of rhyming tetrameter.

²⁷ This ode is an interesting example of fidelity to Wordsworthian precept. It has often been praised, e.g., in *A Treasury of Irish Poetry in the English Tongue*, edited by S. A. Brooke and T. W. Rolleston (New York, n.d.), p. 313.

²⁸ Texts in *A Treasury of Irish Poetry*. No complete edition of Mangan is available. The most inclusive collection is *The Life and Writings of James Clarence Mangan*, by D. J. O'Donoghue (Dublin, 1897).

he dwelt apart from his age; but the reason was probably only the scholarly bent and unusual emotional import of his individualism. Landor's early odes²⁹ have verve and architectonic stability, but the rhymes are clumsy, the verse dries up into mere prose, and the dictional virtues are those of the eighteenth century. But occasionally Landor models authentically after Greek patterns, as these lines from the Pindarick "Ode to Southey" show:

A hundred lane-fed curs bark down
Fame's hundred tongues.³⁰

This was not the Atticism of Keats, but it catches the true spirit of the Greek poets. Much more notably authentic are the fine odes which constitute lyric interludes in *Pericles and Aspasia*. Note the beautiful "Ode to Miletus," in which nine quatrain stanzas of uneven line length and rhyme scheme are preceded by four in a deftly wrought 335335 measure one could wish to see employed more frequently. The following stanza contains the essence of what Landor was born to say:

And many tears are shed
Upon thy bridal bed,
Star of the swimmer in the lonely night!
Who with unbraided hair
Wipedst a breast so fair,
Bounding with toil, more bounding with delight.

The 443443 stanza of the "Ode to Asteròessa" has a comparable symmetry, and exacts even more compression of the poet; and the 4444446 pattern of "Corinna to Tanagra" would be a trying medium for any writer's thought.³¹ Cer-

²⁹ See *The Early Poems of Walter Savage Landor*, by William Bradley (London, n. d.), where one reads on p. 14. "He accepted the eighteenth century without question."

³⁰ For this and other poems cited, see *The Poetical Works of Walter Savage Landor* (Oxford, 1937). The stanza from which these lines are quoted is singled out and commented on in *Walter Savage Landor*, by Edward Waterman Evans (New York, 1892), p. 105.

³¹ Mention must also be made of the beautiful irregular ode, "Aletheia to Phaortes."

tainly Landor was a close student of Pindar, probably understanding him better than any other important English poet has; and this discipleship is evident throughout the *Pericles and Aspasia* poems though it is not suggested (as Ruth Goldmark³² has observed), or is suggested only faintly at best, in the later *Miscellaneous Poems*. There is nothing to show that Landor influenced either the theory or the practice of ode writing in his time. The reason is doubtless that he was a "harmonic" rather than a "melodic" poet, and thus antithetical to the Romantics.³³

✓ Swinburne, too, was an eager student of classical verse. Yet he sensed the charms of emotional expressionism so keenly that his odes—and he wrote as many of them as did any other English poet—violate every classical canon of restraint. Chesterton shrewdly observed of this poet's diction that "it is a sort of fighting and profane parody of the Old Testament; and its lines are made of short English words like the short Roman swords."³⁴ The patterns Swinburne fancied were, however, Greek, and his notion of Attic art seems to have been that it was gorgeous and glittering—the gown of the Winged Victory woven of opals and silver. He wrote Pindarick verse (the "Song for the Centenary of Walter

³² *Studies in the Influence of the Classics on English Literature*, by Ruth I. Goldmark (New York, 1915), pp. 41 ff. This excellent critic points out that Landor had read Pindar very carefully, that the "Ode to Miletus" has "the Pindaric apostrophe, aphorism, condensed figures, and choral development"; and observes of the "Miscellaneous" verse that "one would expect to find some choral odes in this collection, recalling Landor's early passion for Pindar." The poetic style of this collection of 'Miscellaneous' odes and songs is typical of the Latin lyrics, lacking the enchantment and fervor of the Aeolians."

³³ Mention may be made here, for association's sake, of *The Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (London, 1932), which has some few lyrics of interest here. "Earth and Her Praisers" is a ten-stanza Pindarick, but is not termed an ode. "To—" (p. 55) may be an early ode. See also *Christina Georgina Rossetti*, by Eleanor Walter Thomas (New York, 1931), where it is said that Gaetano Polidori issued on his own press during 1841 a translation of an Italian ode by his grandchild, Maria (pp. 22-23).

³⁴ *The Victorian Age in English Literature*, by G. K. Chesterton (New York, 1913), p. 185.

Savage Landor" ³⁵ is a convenient example), but his delight was in imitating the forms of Pindar, though without any attempt at nice conformity with the models. He may, indeed, align strophes, antistrophes, and epodes in the approved sequence.³⁶ On the other hand, as in the "Ode on the Insurrection in Candia," he may group strophes and antistrophes in clusters.³⁷ Here the strophes are in varying meters, the antistrophes correspond, and there is one epode at the close.

The "Birthday Ode for the Anniversary Festival of Victor-Hugo" ³⁸ is a representative instance of Swinburne's Pindaric verse at its best. There are thirteen tripartite sequences, and the poem is a masterly performance in complicated rhythmic regularity. Beautiful lines leap out at one from the page, a witness,

And on the clouds the archangel cleanse his sword,

which is not flawless only because it is metaphorically artificial. Brilliant passages come quickly to mind:

And louder and yet more loud
Till night be shamed of morn
Rings the Black Huntsman's horn
Through darkening deeps beneath the covering cloud
Till all the wild beasts of the darkness hear.

The final epode is simple and melodious. To offset these beauties, however, there are long intervals filled with ranting and veritable raving.

Swinburne's return to the sources of classical inspiration is an event of some significance, even if his work is not genuinely distinguished. If verse could succeed by sheer impact of rhythm alone, his odes would be of the first order; and in some measures, particularly the anapestic, he knows no rival

³⁵ *The Poems of Charles Algernon Swinburne* (New York, 1904).

³⁶ For example, in "Athens, an Ode"

³⁷ There are five strophes, five antistrophes, and one epode.

³⁸ The date was February 26, 1880.

in the history of the form.³⁹ But he fails by reason of a lack of "wit" just as Cowley sinned through excess of "wit." He had all the equipment that consorts with emotional expressionism, but was without a validly thought-out objective towards which his emotion could have been directed. This dearth of thought substance is obvious in such odes as that "On the Proclamation of the Third Republic," wherein what might have been a manifesto becomes a dithyramb.

Therewith one comes to those poets whose departure from Romantic modes of thought and expression led to kinship with older English poets. Coventry Patmore was by training and temperament a classicist. The best passages in *The Angel in the House*⁴⁰ suggest Pope as hardly anything else in nineteenth-century verse does. Nevertheless, the doctrine of expressionism gained in him one of its illustrious converts, all the more memorable because he sought to conjoin freedom of feeling with metrical law. It was, he decided, "right reading" which gives verse its texture; and the metrical system he devised in accordance with this belief opened up to him "quite a new prospect" of the "possibilities of poetry."⁴¹ This system is easy to present as a theory of the relations between syllable and sound, but it is difficult to expound as a method of scansion, touching as it does upon so many subtle problems of accent and quantity. Patmore's most telling point was that the pentameter line is the natural form of English verse when dignity of utterance is coveted, but that not all such lines are of equal length. Thus he might have contended that

To be or not to be: that is the question
is longer than

High as the highest peak of Furness Fells,

³⁹ As in "March, an Ode," which is a beguilingly musical poem

⁴⁰ *Poems*, by Coventry Patmore, edited by Basil Champneys (London, 1906).

⁴¹ *Memoirs and Correspondence of Coventry Patmore*, by Basil Champneys (London, 1900), I, 258

by reason of the pauses essential in interpretive reading. In his own practice, an effort is made to write lines which, when correctly read, will be of equal length.⁴²

The poems done in this measure are grouped in the volume of odes entitled *The Unknown Eros*,⁴³ a collection of religious poems worthy of a place beside the great books of the seventeenth-century mystical tradition. Whether the term "ode" is appropriate here is a nice question. Page, who says that "an Ode must begin with an O, actually or virtually,"⁴⁴ feels that most of the lyrics in *The Unknown Eros* are not properly odes. But, as we have seen, the element of address is historically important only in so far as it indicates that ode writing derived from classical models; and as a consequence Page's test is unsatisfactory. The absence of nearly everything that might suggest a basis for comparison with classical or humanistic odes is a more important fact; and obviously such poems as "The Toys" are what the eighteenth century would have called "lines." To Patmore himself, the word "ode" meant a poem of irregular structure, and he used it to indicate that his lyrics were written in lines having a variable number of accents.

At any rate, some portions of *The Unknown Eros* have a shy, unforgettable beauty. "Eros and Psyche" is one of the finest amorous odes in the literature, being terse, virile, and luminous with metaphors distinguished by a high order of imagination. The lines are of uneven length but tend to be

⁴² Patmore *A Study in Poetry*, by Frederick Page (London, 1933), pp. 145-70. Patmore's own essay on his system is to be found in Champney's edition of the *Poems*.

⁴³ London, 1878. This edition contains 46 odes.

⁴⁴ Page, *op. cit.*, p. 116. Page also says (p. 151) "for Patmore the unit of iambic verse (we are not here concerned with any other) was not the foot of two syllables, but the 'dipode' or 'metre' of four, each section containing a minor as well as a major accent. Thus the ten-syllable line was not a pentameter but a trimeter, the measure being filled out with a pause, equal to two syllables, and so with every other line that is not a multiple of four syllables, and among the pauses not only the caesura but the pauses between adjacent accents have to be counted."

most effective when most nearly regular. Note this terse passage:

Kiss me again, and clasp me round the heart,
Till fill'd with thee am I
As the cocoon is with the butterfly.

A good illustration of Patmore's technique is afforded by "Deliciae Sapientiae de Amore," in which there are numerous one and two-stress lines,⁴⁵ though Alexandrines also are introduced. In these poems, the rhythm is determined according to a carefully devised prosodic plan, so that the ear surrenders naturally to the cadence suggested. Patmore was, however, little more successful as a trail blazer than other innovators have been. Catholic poets in number have followed his example,⁴⁶ and writers on poetics have endorsed some of his ideas. Nevertheless, the Patmorean ode patterns remain exotic and individualistic, though they are also not Romantic.

✓ By comparison with his friend Patmore, Francis Thompson seems a brilliant Romantic who plucked skeins of gold and silver thread from the historic tapestry of English verse. It must be admitted that he sometimes carries Shelleyan rhythms through such a bath of diction that in the end they resemble shredded *Urn-Burial* prose festooned with additional epithets. This is, however, by no means all there is to Thompson.⁴⁷ He was, in the "Hound of Heaven," the spokesman for an anti-Romantic program; and he was also one of the first medievalists. Above all, many of his odes are

⁴⁵ There are ten one-stress lines, and even more two-stress lines. A comparable technical achievement is "Vesica Piscis," a poem of only fifteen lines varying in length from one to seven feet. The poem has, of course, an underlying religious significance. And it may, perhaps, be suggested that Patmore turned to the ode partly because the word connoted the strain of aspiration, of spiritual objective, which he desired to express in language.

⁴⁶ For example, "Pennies" and other lyrics of Joyce Kilmer. See *Joyce Kilmer Poems, Essays and Letters*, edited by R. C. Holliday (New York, 1920).

⁴⁷ See *Poems of Francis Thompson*, edited by T. L. Connolly (New York, 1932), and *The Life of Francis Thompson*, by Everard Meynell (New York, 1919).

written with a freedom and vigor reminiscent of the seventeenth century at its very best; and the ear of the poet who presided over their making was more discriminating than that of any of his contemporaries. Critics who say there is nothing new in the "Corymbus for Autumn" are merely blinded by one-sided theories of what poetry ought to be. What other modern verse carries its burden of metaphor and epithet with greater firmness and serenity? Yet even this is not the finest of Thompson's offerings. Poems like the "Ode after Easter" or "Assumpta Maria" are difficult to understand and doubtless not attractive to many who understand them. But surely they do illustrate with magnificent assurance the fact that the ode permits great freedom of utterance while remaining none the less a pattern having no room for mere emotional divagation.

Much more might be said concerning these and other poets.⁴⁸ It must suffice, however, to add that among the merits of the generation to which Gerard Manley Hopkins,⁴⁹ Robert Bridges,⁵⁰ and Richard Watson Dixon⁵¹ belonged was its industrious inquiry into the laws which govern the structure of English verse. These poets brought to that re-

⁴⁸ George Meredith may someday be adjudged a more important poet than he is now held to be. Certainly he turned to the ode form because, like Beddoes, he believed that it was complex and sinuous. The Meredithian Pindarick is often of great interest to the student of technique, as witness the skillfully designed pattern of "Meditation under Stars." But there is about all this verse a quality that suggests preserved fruit, with epithets candied into position till they resemble the powdery white of the sugar on a *marron glacé*. See *Poems*, by George Meredith (New York, 1899). The early poems, entitled odes, are to be found on pp. 427-47. One, "To the Comic Spirit," has some stanzas of record length. Others are Pindaricks, though not termed so. The odes of William Watson are appealing, but they light up no poetic lane not traveled eagerly in his time. He wrote intricate, fluent seven and eight-line stanzas. Thus the "Ode to Arthur Christopher Benson" has a 3333336 pattern, rhyming *ababccb*. See *The Collected Poems of William Watson* (London, 1899).

⁴⁹ *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, edited by Robert Bridges (Oxford, 1915).

⁵⁰ *Poetical Works of Robert Bridges* (London, 1936).

⁵¹ *Poems by the Late Rev. Dr. Richard Watson Dixon*, edited by Robert Bridges (London, 1909).

search a tolerant historical and linguistic scholarship which they tested in the crucible of creative writing. Hopkins was an innovator who devised and illustrated a theory of rhythms which has seemed and will seem to many readers regrettably bizarre and individualistic. But this theory was born of a desire for patterns, and therewith of dissatisfaction with purely emotional moods as guides to effective utterance. Hopkins may have been loath to scan verse, schoolboy fashion, in the time-honored Johnsonian manner; but he was a brilliant student of Greek and English metrics as well as of the intimate association between meter as such and music. Therefore he turned not to *vers libre* but to the Pindarick, which he understood all the better because he likewise knew and relished the beauty of Pindar's originals. "The Wreck of the Deutschland" and "The Loss of the Eurydice" are great odes which carry Milton's explorations into the possibilities of English choral rhythms farther than anyone since Milton had carried them. But Father Hopkins was, at the time of his death, planning still more ambitious odes, notably one on Edmund Campion the form of which was to be "like 'Alexander's Feast' or 'Lycidas.'" ⁵² There is also some reason for thinking that "The Windhover" is not a sonnet but a short ode in the Miltonic manner.

Bridges resembled his friend Hopkins in that he was led by the study of English poetic measure to dissatisfaction with both mere expressionism and ignorant legalism. The hexameters of the "Testament of Beauty" constitute a triumph of sanely applied law over anarchical formlessness. Bridges did relatively little, however, in the ode form, being so much more of a Roman than his friend. The choral odes in *Prometheus the Firegiver* are spirited and exquisitely wrought. The three odes included in *Shorter Poems* are Latin in form and import. More important possibly is Bridges' achievement

⁵² *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, edited by Claude Collier Abbott (London, 1935), pp. 135, 147.

as a writer of formal odes set to music. A good example is his *Ode for the Bicentenary Commemoration of Henry Purcell*,⁵³ the Preface to which is the most judicious commentary any recent poet has written on the moot question of music and verse. This insight is all the more striking because few of Bridges' contemporaries understood the problem. Saintsbury⁵⁴ was singularly obtuse whenever he referred to it; and Walter Raleigh⁵⁵ was merely facetious. On the other hand, Hopkins was in his modest way a composer, writing "some music, Gregorian, in the natural scale of A, to Collins' 'Ode to Evening,' " and composing airs for Bridges' "Spring Odes."⁵⁶

The present survey is, therefore, concluded.⁵⁷ It is now in

⁵³ London, 1896 This ode was sung at the Leeds Festival and at the London Purcell Commemoration The music was composed by Hubert Parry Another similar ode (*Poetical Works*, p. 401) is "A Hymn of Nature, An Ode Written for Music" Parry was the composer, and the ode was performed at the Gloucester Festival, in 1898

⁵⁴ See, for example, "Some Recent Studies in English Prose," in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. IX (London, 1919)

⁵⁵ *The Letters of Sir Walter Raleigh* (New York, 1926), I, 67 "I am writing an ode for the installation of a Chancellor (Spencer) at Victoria University It is to be set to music, and my musician wants to close with some lines of this metrical pattern—'Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty Ride on' That shows, you what a musician is!"

⁵⁶ *Letters . . . to Robert Bridges*, pp. 103, 199

⁵⁷ Some brief references to the development of the ode in American literature during the nineteenth century may be appended For decades the poets followed Augustan recipes The formal ode, written to grace an occasion, is exemplified by "Fair Harvard an Ode for the Centennial of 1836," by the Rev. Samuel Gilman, which might have been written by any English scholar and divine with leisure for such things When Dr. England, Roman Catholic Bishop of Charleston, S. C., died, the "Testimonials of Respect" included a short ode "adapted to the Irish air, Cushmanachree" Even better verse was similarly derivative, as Poe rightly indicated in a blunt notice of Halleck's "Marco Bozzaris" (*The Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, New York, 1864, III, 69) The fashionable magazines trooped along far to the rear of the procession The verse of Bryant and Poe (cf. Riverside editions of these and other poets cited) pointed, however, to an illustrious future and was itself indicative of an American Renaissance "To a Waterfowl" is one of the noblest short odes in the language, "The Bells" is a highly stylized, art-for-art's sake Pindarick Then the poets of New England's golden age domesticated the ode Emerson, writing lyrics as diverse as the "Concord Hymn," "Threnody," and "Ode Inscribed to William Canning," seemed to walk at will among the centuries, with his heart

order to restate, with some difference of emphasis on this or that detail, certain pertinent assertions made to the beginning of this book. In English usage, the ode is a poem derived from, but not slavishly modeled upon, Greek and Latin lyrics to which the name "ode" was given by the humanists of the Renaissance. Therefore, no single definition of the word will be adequate. Each generation of poets offered its own interpretation in turn, based upon its conception of the nature of the classical exemplars and its role in the shifting drama of English poetry. Thus the ode was a different thing to the mature Cowley than it had been to Ben Jonson, because these poets understood Pindar differently and were of different minds concerning the import of lyric verse.³ At the close of the Victorian Age, however, the ode was generally taken to be either a kind of ditty which mediocre poets hammered out in stilted lines to grace some festival or kindred occasion, or a complex, more or less "orchestral," composition which writers of artistic verse favored when they had a theme which consorted well with reflection having a core of religious, philosophic, or patriotic emotion. Many writers also disregarded completely the relationships between music and verse. It was assumed on the one hand that the higher forms of mu-

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pledged to a transcendental seventeenth and his mind to a skeptical eighteenth. At all events, it is the "Hymn" which has defied time. Lowell has already been mentioned. The ode historian will find some things of value in Longfellow and Holmes, notably the second poet's "Chambered Nautilus," with its admirable Alexandrine conclusion to a finely wrought seven-line stanza. Walt Whitman was the first of the poets whom a craving for unhampered emotional expressionism sundered completely from classicism. Formally, some of his dithyrambs consort well with the Pindarick idea, however shorn they may be of meter and rhyme. Perhaps analysis would show that "When Lilacs Last in the Door-yard Bloomed" is not unlike other Romantic threnodies in structure. Nevertheless, this and other Whitman poems could be termed odes only on the basis of the eighteenth-century feeling that any primitive—or pseudo-primitive—impassioned utterance in verse is an ode, and to that idea the historian of the ode cannot, of course, subscribe. It was Sidney Lanier who fashioned the newer American Pindarick. Critics respect also the eloquent Pindaricks of William Vaughn Moody. See *Selected Poems of William Vaughn Moody*, edited by Robert Morss Lovett (Boston, 1931).

sic are "pure"—that is, not companionable with words of any sort; and on the other hand the autonomous melody of language was coveted by all who felt that what an artist in words might have to say was far less important than the manner in which he said it. In general these views resulted from the Romantic revolt against the formalism of eighteenth-century prosodic practice, but they were retained by most of those who in turn repudiated Romanticism.

This modern interpretation of the word "ode" may be definitive. But it may also prove to be as impermanent as any of the older descriptions. For one thing, the generic term "lyric," which for some decades was a kind of catch-all into which the verse forms of yore were tossed, has of late been under some scrutiny. The fortunes of music have likewise changed; and composers from Strauss to Hanson have come to look upon the art of setting words to music as one of their principal tasks. The number of significant odes written to accompany music has increased considerably, and not a few poets have thought it worth while to learn to play an instrument or even how to compose an air. Finally, the revolt against emotional expressionism, while by no means triumphant in every part of the field, has made too much headway to be ignored. It is true that Herbert Read ⁷⁸ says of the modern poet, "He knows that in its greatest moments there is no regularity in Shakespeare's verse, but only a tremendous sincerity, and a rhythm that is the rhythm of the emotional mood expressed and not the rhythm of a regular scheme." But this manifesto of emotional expressionism was written more than ten years ago.

For my part I feel that while English poetry will not cease to husband the good fruits of expressionism, it has grown conscious once again of the virtues fostered by classical and humanistic discipline. Certainly the ode form is more impor-

⁷⁸ *Phases of English Poetry* (London, 1928), p. 146

tant now than it was when Tennyson died.⁵⁹ The reason seems to be a very old one—that the flexibility of the ancient ode forms is always a boon to the poet whose theme and feeling can find no outlet in the simpler lyric measures. True enough, the significance of theme and emotion is not now what it was in eras when the gravity of the Psalmist was inlaid into all English utterance. But though life may be a waste land or the scene of injustice demanding revolution of us all, the poet still rises with the mantle of the prophet about him. And on the scroll in his hands there is inscribed the ode.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Additional names would include Laurence Binyon (*Odes*, London, 1931), Allen Tate ("Ode to the Confederate Dead," in *Poems, 1928-1931*, New York, 1931), Charles Plumb ("Ode to Night," in *The Squirrel's Granary*, by Sir William Beach Thomas, New York, 1936), and Charles L. O'Donnell ("The Dead Musician" in *Cloister and Other Poems*, New York, 1927)

⁶⁰ See "To Edward Upward, Schoolmaster," by W. H. Auden, in *Poems* (New York, 1934)

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